

THE
VANITY
OF
Mans Present State
PROVED and APPLIED,
IN A
SERMON
on *Psalms* 39. 5.

With divers Sermons of the Saints Communion with God, and Safety under his Protection, in order to their future

GLORY,
on *Psalms* 73. 23, 24, 25, 26.

By the late able and Faithful Minister of the Word
JOHN WILSON

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TO THE
HONOURABLE
The Lady
CATHARINE BOOTH.

MADAM,

THese Sermons to which you gave so free entertainment when they were preached under your roof (which you made a Sanctuary) do not doubt of your Countenance. The first part (being of mans state altogether vanity) was by the reverend Authors own hand scarce finished before his distemper had disabled him from service of this nature. And albeit, the latter part were by him destined to obscurity amongst his private papers; yet by the assistance of special friends, that compared his short notes with what was taken from his mouth. I have answered the importunity of others, that often pressed me to make them publick; being very much perswaded that (howbeit they want those enlargements and pollishings which they would not have wanted, had he designed them for the Press.) I shall not in the least be injurious to his memory, amongst those that were acquainted with his learned abilities; and have the ingenuity to grant what allowance may be justly challenged, where the author is not the putter forth of his own work; and withall, will understand the disadvantageous circumstances he lay under, both in
his

The Epistle Dedicatory.

his studies and preaching. His strong bodie and vivacious spirits being weakned and rendred languid by an inveterate distemper. I presume (Madam) these discourses will have due esteem and value from you, who have made Religion your most serious and close concern, received the word with all readines, given eminent testimonie of the power of it in a mortified and holy conversation, and especially prized old, plain, substantial truths, which have put you in mind of your frailty, and been furtherance to your faith, love, and holy obedience. Whilst some, either utter strangers to communion with God (or worse) malicious scorers have undervalued the Saints heaven upon earth; and too many others, leaving necessary and acknowledged doctrines, in the study and practice of which, the servants of Christ have lived holily, and died happily. and gaping after new-nothings, strange notions, not at all conducing to their improvement of an heavenly life, have puffed up their fancies and thinned their souls. I cannot forget with what pious zeal, and Christian courage God hath spirited you that have adventured to be singular in the strictest profession and practice of piety; and set you aloft, high above all the little dangers and fears of sullying your quality by being thought over serious and too busie about soul-concerns; well understanding that the noblest extraction cannot be embased, but the meanest ennobled by holiness, and that it is honour of a double die, for which Ladies are more bebolding to their virtues than titles or Escutcheons, their devout lives, than dead Ancestors. With what a publick spirit hath God acted you, to appear so worthily for his desired service? Though well aware that it would cost you the indignation of the greater sort, and the rude taunts of the profane rabble, which have concerned

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you no more; than to animate your godly resolution to be yet more vile in the discharge of a good conscience, service of God in your place, and according to your degree. Nay your manner of life so blameless, so exemplary; your zeal for God and his truth are and shall be your lasting honour, and embalm your name, when the sect of the Libertines (that live at so lewd a rate as if their immortal souls were designed only to give a freshness to their faces, gracefulness to their carriage, briskness to their spirits, and in all to serve their vanity) shall be sweetly fed upon by the worms, and leave a memory more odious than their carcases. But, while I am doing Justice to your virtues, least I should offend your humble modesty, (which deserves so much the more, by how much it less affects mention of what is due to the world as well as you) I shall add no more but my humble and earnest prayers to almighty God to sanctifie you wholly to preserve your whole spirit, soul and body blameless unto the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.



TO THE
READER.

It cannot but be highly proper, that the sons of men should be acquainted with the nature of their present state, that so they may see whether they are to acquiesce in it, or seek after another, which may afford more happiness and contentment. Their endeavours after another state will doubtless be proportionable to their apprehensions and esteem of this. If they take this to be good, they will rest satisfied with it without seeking any farther: but if otherwise, they will look about them, and enquire after another. Those *Israelites* which think well of *Egypt*, move but faintly towards *Canaan*. And whiles *Peter* perswades himself he hath glory enough upon Mount *Tabor*, he cares not for seeking for any more. He will never care much for an heaven above, who conceits he hath one below. But then on the other hand, he who takes this present state to be a state of vanity, and sees he is like to pass away his dayes in sin and misery, will (if he be one that hath not lost the use of his reason) cast about, and endeavour to possess himself of a better state, wherein he may be free from those evils which now he groans and sighs under. Such a
man

To the Reader.

man will be ready to cry out and say, O what shall I do? What course shall I take? Which way shall I deliver my self out of my present distress? *Oh that I had wings like a Dove, that I might fly away, and be at rest!* Oh for *Elijahs* Chariot and horses, to convey me up to glory! *Oh that I could climb up beyond the Stars, and seat my self amongst those blessed Souls which are about the Throne of God!* Then might I wipe away all tears from mine eyes, and triumph over my present misery. But whiles I am in the state wherein I am, surrounded with temptations, sins, afflictions, what can be expected, but that I should sit like *Jerusalem*, with the tears upon my Cheeks, and make them my meat and drink night and day? What more than this can be expected from me, save that I am to despise the World with all the flatteries thereof, and exercise my self in a vigorous and restless pursuit of a state which will yield me that comfort which this is utterly incapable of affording? Such as this will be the language of a man, who understood the nature of this present state. And to work the Sons of men to such resentments of it, and truly endeavours after a better state, is the intent of this small discourse: Wherein I have endeavoured to shew what a kind of state this is, how it came to be so, and what use we are to make of it. It was indeed some late unhealthfulness of mine own, which lead my thoughts to this subject, but there is no reason wherefore that should render it less acceptable; for the nature of it is so common to all mankind, that there are no persons whatsoever, but are concerned in it. And there are none sure, unless they have lien a sleep ever since they came into the

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the world, but can contribute some evidence to the present truth. He that hath lived any considerable number of years in the world, and yet hath nothing to say of the vanity of his present state, is rather to be look'd upon as overwhelm'd with vanity than exempted from it. But whether men are sensible of the vanity of their present state or not, the point insisted on will nevertheless remain in force against them. Now let the great Lord and disposer of souls, bless the following instructions, open the eyes of men that they may see the vanity of their present state, and stir them up seasonably to make out after a better, that so being freed from sin and misery, they may they may enjoy a state of holiness and peace for ever.

In sequentem doctissimi Domini Jo-
bannis Wilsoni de statu Vanitatis
vanissimo Tractatum.

A Litis aucupio argenti lassatus inani,
Crasse, sitibundus fulvum, liquidumq; metallum
Deglutis. Quis non crassus? Sudare soluta
Liquuntur vires, cura laniantur atroci,
Fallitur, eripitur, lato captatur biatu,
Ulterius sitiens tamen urget hirudo petendi.
Quis petit ab quis! Aquas ex fonte salutis aperto?
Quisve Deum, Christum, cælum sectatur anhelus?
Aut tempestiva quis sollicitudine status
Pungitur æterni? Nullus? Forte unus, & alter,
Pro Cælo certare jubet sapientia, clamans
Excute segnitiam, cessator, ad arma vocaris;
Persentisce, piger, stimulos torpedine dempta;
Dum radio claro fallacia gaudia monstrat
Brachia Centimano desunt, obtorpet Arachne,
Lynceus & talpa est, O Monstrum! Batte, filebis,
Midas auritus petulante reculcitrat æstu,
Parve; tibi suadere, liber, provincia dura est.
Sed quid dico? Tuum non est opus, illa potestas
Sufficit hic tantum cui mundi machina debet,
Illius auxilio pravorum dedoceantur
Artifices, discant potius pollere supernis,
Turpe, rogent nostrum quo tandem vivere ducat,
Crustati vitiis mollescant; sintq; lacertis
Herculis indomiti vera pietate subacti;
Aures atq; graves pateant dum tympana pulsas,
Det Deus & monitis corda incrassata terebres.
*Segniter iniquot, inepte, dies dormis vocat, instet

* Imitat. Persii. Sat. 5.

Spiritus

*Spiritus. Ab nondum? Rursum vocitare? Surge
Eia ais? Inquit Surge. Negas? Sed surgito. Surgam
Quando? Cras, Cras? Ludis. Sum serius Hei bo,
O abiit jam tota dies dum clamito surge.*

*Quorsum? en præ foribus vigiles minitantur acerba
Mors armata, Sathanq; furens, Barathrumq; debiscens.*

Peciora justitiæ veræ thorace tuere,

Speq; salutifera galeatus protinus esto;

Arreptus subito scripturæ stringitor ensis;

Quo minus igniferis telis penetrare Sathanis,

Mors armis exuta suis captiva trahatur,

Infernusq; vorax frustra dilatet biatum,

Stertis adhuc? abeo, nec habebis porro vocantem.

J. GOLBORNE.

Upon

*Upon the much lamented Death of
the Reverend Mr. JOHN
WILSON Minister of
Gods Word.*

L Et him that lives by Funerals, whose Verses
Do mercenary duty to proud Herfes.
Go Court some puling Muse with bleared eyes
To cut foul faces at the obsequies,
And put the World into a peck of fears,
Lest that it should be delug'd by her tears;
Call in some greedy Heir to help, when clad,
He's a close Mourner, for his cloaths are sad.
The occasion here too mournful is to be
Assisted with the paint of Pageantry.
The *Irish* howlers, or the formal Mum
Of solemn Statues would but ill become
This sober sadness, such are Hirelings, where
The sorry loss can scarce squeez out a tear.
Here a large sum of sighs not to disburse
Were gross stupidity, or something worse.
Where those that know him well, cannot review
Their loss at distance, but their griefs renew:
Time and experience do make them know
Their want much better, and their sorrows grow:
His love, care, tenderness, well understood
Do highly aggravate the Widowhood
Of his dear Relict; thought on more and more
Shew the loss greater than they did before.
Their sweet converse together, grave and free,
Did seem a strife, who should most winners be.

A strife by marri'd couples to be chose,
Where both are winners, and yet neither lose.
Prudent provision, fruit of moderate cares,
He left his children, and what's more, his prayers:
And for the Church his Son's design'd; yet knew,
From what point only Church-preferment blew.
Dislik'd their Policy, who cunning grown,
Ensnare their children; but to make their moan,
Cherish'd no secret hopes that they might find
The art to tack about and gain the wind.
He was a true Peace-maker, more because
Not bias'd by unjust and partial Laws
Of hearing, and adhering to one side:
His aim was to make friends, and not divide.
They who befriend one party, take on trust
Complaints, if they do right, yet are not just.
His widow, children, friends he left to moan
The Churches loss much greater than their own.
Judgment, wit, memory did well agree,
Yet strove who most should benefactor be.
His phancy did not judgments strength abate,
As some gums into air evaporate.
Nor was his judgment so devoid of it,
With harlotry to brand all modest wit.
The choicest readings clarified by
His judgment lay hiv'd in his memory.
They who with slight stuff memory abuse
Vaunt gaudy Sumpter of old boots and shooes.
He was close student, and the very prime
Of learned Authors did imploy his time.
To fathers he due veneration bore,
Valu'd the Authors much, their reason more;
The Scripture most, with which they *Hydra* slew,
Lopping off heads of errors as they grew:}

With

With that they baffed the Religion,
Whose wicked gods and goddesſes had none:
If not belyed by their votaries,
The fatal tree is hung with *Mercuries*:
And though great *Jupiter* might ſave his gullet,
Yet ſhould not ſcape the clyſter of a mullet.
He thought not fondly what a father ſaith,
Without the book a ſolid ground for faith,
Or that they could not erre, who diſagree,
Or that from errors *Peters* charge was free.
He was acquainted with the very beſt
Of modern Authors, and did know the reſt:
Of ſtrange Religions, and their grounds by view,
Being confirm'd in doctrine of the true,
Subſtantial truths received did not move
Him leſs to value, but them more improve.
With great pains, plainneſs, judgment he did preach,
Order'd his words not to confound, but teach.
His Doctrine ſolid, aim'd to make men know
That which was good, his uſe to make them ſo.
His ſweet allurements, pleaſing were and grave
With holy guile loſt ſouls to catch and ſave.
With Muſhroom-notions light he did not cheat
Attentive hearers giving froth for meat;
When they flock'd to the windows to be fed,
They were not ſerv'd with air inſtead of bread:
But faithfully diſpenſed with good ſkill
The judgment to inform, incline the will;
Denying commonly his learned parts.
The better to convince and win mens hearts,
Which did ſucceed: the word that cauſ'd a flame
In his own ſoul, in others rais'd the ſame.
His ſtudies, prayers, and ſweat, wherewith he taught,
Did clearly ſhew at how great rate he ſought
The welfare of his people: being bent
As thoſe he valu'd for them to be ſpent;

For persecuting sickness made him pay,
A round fine for the labors of each day,
This grew by gains at length, that did amount
To its own ruine, and his great accompt.
That cruel rigour made him not to cease
Till its injustice bound him to the peace,
Whom close imprisonment, nor Panick dread
Of mens severity had silenced.
Without thy hand, Lord, what could sickness do ?
It was thy Sergeant, I am silenc'd too.
Thy Providence, yet how shall we expound,
Thy choicest goods when thou hid'st under ground.
Is not some evil drawing on, when one
Into thy work scarce enters but is gone ?
Another not till middle of the day
Is suffer'd there, but must be had away :
The third be gone about his ages noon,
Of whom a late departure were too soon,
When Labourers are few, the harvest great,
This star of the first magnitude must set,
This holy Prophet fall. Why do I call
A soaring flight from Earth to Heaven a fall;
Where (whilst in this vain world, and vale of tears,
Our faith, hope, love are weaken'd by our fears :
Our sweets imbitter'd, and the pleasant things
This world affords are not without their stings :
Our bodies sickly, subject unto pain :
Our souls polluted with sins loathsome stain)
He is secure from sin above the treats
Of worldly blandishments and cruel threats
Of violence, is licenced to preach
The glories of the King, and fears no breach
Of Law. There he is benefic'd. It's cross,
That his great benefit should be our loss.

I

The present State of Man, a State of extream vanity.

SERMON I.

Pfal. 39. 5. *Verily every man at his best
State is altogether vanity.* Selah.

MY design at this time is to speak of the present state of man, and to give you what account Scripture, Reason, and Experience affords us thereof: and withal, to shew you what considerations we are to take up from thence, and what use we are to make of it. There is a twofold State of man: the one is present, and the other future. The former is a State of exercise and service: the last of retribution and reward. It is the former of these I intend at present to discourse of, in order whereunto I have chosen these words, wherein *David* (who, as appears by the title, was the author of this Psalm) gives us a peremptory and full account thereof. From the contemplation and view of his own misery, he takes occasion to consider what was the condition of others, whether his case were altogether singular, or whether it were not with others as it was with him: and after much serious musing and diligent inquiry, he breaks forth into this positive and general conclusion, *Verily every man at his best state, &c.*

C In

In such sort do's God oft times dispose of men as to their abilities, opportunities, observances, experiences, that some are more capable of giving us an account of one thing, some of another. For instance, *David* being one that was exercised with various conditions, one while lifted up to the clouds by prosperity, another while thrown down into the bottom of the Sea by adversity; we must needs look upon him as highly capable of giving us a true and certain account of the nature of mans present state. In like manner *Solomon* his Son being one that gave up himself so much to the study of earthly things, such as Riches, Honours, and Pleasures; and being attended with such advantagious circumstances tending to help and further him in his Inquiry, we must needs look upon him as far more fit to give us an account thereof, than one whose studies and conditions carry his thoughts another way. Now by how much Providence do's the more dispose, and qualifie any persons for giving us an account of the nature of things, by so much we should be the forwarder in advising with them, and look upon the account which they give of them, as more considerable and valuable. If then a man would have an account of mans present state, he should go to *David*: If of the nature of earthly things, he should go to *Solomon*. Now the account which *David* gives of mans present state, we have in the recited words, *Verily every man at his best state*, &c. which passage is so full and emphatical, that more could not have been said in so few words.

1. He tells us, *man is vanity* ; not only vain in the concrete, but vanity in the abstract : thereby signifying how far vanity hath invaded him, and prevailed upon him, which it hath done in such a degree, that he is become even vanity it self. Were it only some little tincture of vanity that he laboured under, his case were less miserable : but alas ! it is much otherwise ; vanity hath got such head, that it rules and bears sway in him ; insomuch that it hath power to denominate him, and give him his name. There is a great deal of difference betwixt those terms which pass in the concreative form, and those which pass in the abstractive. Those which pass in the concreative, import there is some degree of that, which is spoken of in the subject referred to : but those which pass in the abstractive, import there is that which is spoken of, and little or nothing else. To say man is vain, imports there is some degree of vanity in him, but to say he is vanity, imports a great deal more. But on this I need less to enlarge because of what follows.

2. As if that were not sufficient to acquaint us with the nature of his condition, he saith he is כל הבר altogether vanity, thereby importing as much as if he had said, he is meer vanity, or he is nothing but vanity. Hence that of Muis, *Homo in se uno omne genus vanitatis complectitur*, Man in himself alone contains all kind of vanity. And hence likewise that of Genebrard, *Homo non est particula vanitatis, sed tota, integra, & solida vanitas*, Man is not a

particle of vanity : But the whole, intire, and full business of vanity, insomuch that as he do's partake with all other creatures in the nature of his existence, so the vanitie which is dispers'd amongst all the creatures seems to be aggregated and united in him : with Inanimates he is obnoxious to chance, with Plants to decay, with Brutes to sufferings : Nay the vanity which is in him alone exceeds all the vanity of all the creatures joyned together. Oh it's sad it should be thus with us ! Its sad that he for whose sake all the creatures were in some sort made, should be vainer than any of them, nay vainer than all of them taken together : But thus it is, and we are to know it, and consider it for our good. And,

3. It is not thus with one particular man, but with the whole race of mankind as they remain in this militant, warfaring state. כל אדם כל הבל *All Adam, all vanity* : so the Original, word for word, which our Translators have thought fit to render, *Every man is altogether vanity*. Vanity like an Universal contagion, hath not only seized upon one, or a few, but hath overspread the whole posterity of *Adam* ; so that all without exception, are born, live, and dye therein. There is not any Nation, or people under the whole heaven who are not concerned in this matter. The Sun it self never beheld that man whose state here was not a state of vanity. Had a man the wings of the morning so that he might fly into the uttermost parts of the earth and take a view of the several people thereof,

thereof, he would abundantly find the truth of what I now say, and return with this report, Oh the state of them all, every one, is a state of vanity. And,

4. It is not thus with man only when he is in adversity, and things are at the lowest ebb with him, but in his highest prosperity when things go best with him. *Verily every man at his best state, &c.* The word here translated *best state*, is *בטח* which how it should be rendered, hath, I find, more then a little exercised the thoughts of interpreters. But not to trouble you with a recital of different versions and opinions concerning it; the design of the Psalmist in it seems to be this, That man when he is in his prime consistency, or when he is most erect, or established, is even then altogether vanity: when like *Josephs* sheaf, he stands upright, and the sheaves round about him make obeysance to him, *Gen. 37. 7.* Or when like *David*, having overcome all his enemies, he is settled in his Kingdom, *2 Sam. 22. 1.* even then he is altogether vanity. That when a man is low in the world, labouring under poverty, pain, sickness, disgrace, persecutions, and the like, he should be in a state of vanity, is not so incredible, but that when he abounds with all the felicities, and good things of this life, he should be so, is not so easie to be apprehended. Yet the Holy Ghost who is the most competent Judge in this, as well as in all other cases, will have us to know that when he is in the best condition, and attended with the most favourable circumstances, the world

can afford him, he is even then in a state of vanity.

5. For working in us a stronger belief of this truth, it is usher'd in with a note of asseveration, *IN, Verily*, as if the Psalmist had said, it is a most real and certain truth, and worthy to be believed of all mankind that every man in his best consistency, or most flourishing condition, even when he may promise himself the greatest measure of stability and happiness, *is altogether vanity*. When his circumstances are most benign and favourable, and afford the best aspect they are capable of yielding, even then he is meer vanity.

6. And all this for the further confirmation of the matter, is backed with a *Selah*: which I am apt to think, with *Vatablus*, and *Grotius*, stands here not only as a musical note directing the singers in the Temple how to order their voice, but as a note of excitation to stir us all up to greater attention and observation. And surely if there be any thing which is worthy the consideration of the sons of men, and which may serve to take them off their pride, and vain glory, and make them base, and vile in their own eyes; it is this, that all of them in their best condition, are most certainly in a state of extream vanity. And thus I have given you an account of the design, extent, and Emphasis of the Text: And now desire to know how more could have been said in so few words, nay in the greatest multitude? The Psalmist seems to have served up this truth to the greatest height he could possibly

raise

raise it. When a man hath studied, and said all that ever he can, what can he say more than we have here in these words? When he hath exercised both brain and tongue, when he hath gathered together whatever either wit or language can afford, What can he say more, than *that every man at his best state is altogether vanity?* The importance of the words being thus laid before you, I shall offer you the point I intend to insist on, which is this, *That the present state of man is a state of extream vanity:* Notwithstanding his splendid appearances, his high apprehensions of himself, and his great hopes of a Terrestrial happiness, yet his present state is a state of extream vanity. He ruffles a while in the world, makes a great bustle and stirr, feeds himself with golden dreams, promises to himself fine and delicate things; and after he hath exercised himself a season herein, in spite of all his pretences and hopes, he finds the Text verified in him, and that he is no other than a heap of meer vanity. To fetch in proof of this from other places of Scripture were needless; for the Text it self is so clear and full, that to those, who acknowledge the Authority of this Book, it cannot but be abundantly sufficient. However, to shew you the agreement of other places of Scripture with this, I shall offer you two or three passages holding forth the same thing: Hereof God first gave notice in *Adams* name, which signifies earth, or dust; whereunto he seems to have reference, when he saith, *Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou*

return, Gen. 3. 19. Not but that if he had persisted in his innocency, he should, (contrary to what the *Socinians* teach) have been free from death; for God in pursuance of his Covenant with him would have secured him from it: But having deserted his innocency, and thereby forfeited the benefit of the covenant, he was in himself, or in respect of his constitutive principles lyable to dissolution and putrefaction. And truly it was not difficult in the frame of his nature and some other circumstances to see, that he was designed for a fall. And as if this were not sufficient, *Adam* himself taught it in his Son *Abels* name, which is the very word used in the Text, and signifies *vanity*, Gen. 4. 3. So early did he see, that he and his posterity were designed here for a state of vanity, that the second Son which he hath, he stiles *Abel*, or *Vanity*. But though these Texts afford much light as to this matter, yet there are others wherein this doctrine is much more conspicuous. *Job* 11. 12. *Zophar* speaking of man saith, *Vain man would be wise*. He is certainly vain, but yet would believe himself, and would likewise have the world to believe that he is otherwise. There are some diseases which invading the head, and there seizing on the animal spirits, work such discomposure that the persons who are exercised therewith are unsensible of them: And thus it is in the present case: the vanity which hath seized upon man, hath so far prevailed upon him, that he is become unsensible of it, which do's aggravate his misery in this respect,

respect, that it disables him from those endeavours after relief, which otherwise he might make use of. And saith the Apostle, *Jam. 2. 20. Wilt thou know O vain man?* A vigorous and quick expression, declaring the great vanity of man, and as in other matters so particularly in his disputing, and reasoning in the things of God. And the Psalmist, *Psal. 89. 47.* seems somewhat earnestly to expostulate with God about this matter, saying, *Wherefore hast thou made all men in vain? Or as Castellio turns it, Quam frivolum creaveris omne genus hominum; What a frivolous thing hast thou made all mankind?* Than these places, what can be more plain? What man is there who acknowledging the authority of the Scripture, will not confess the truth of the point, and grant that the present state of man is vain? We commonly have good evidence ere we yield to what is spoken against our selves: But here the evidence is so clear and strong, that there is no room for gain-saying, or doubting: So that my business will not lye so much in confirming the point in general, as in making it good in the several particulars belonging to it, and setting it home on our hearts and Consciences, that so we may do what is meet to be done upon the revealing of such an important, and affecting truth. For the prosecution and managment whereof I shall,

1. Shew what Vanity is, or what it is to be in a state of vanity. And the word Vanity is of such signification, that it is ever used

in a bad sense. Where ever we find it in Scripture, it still denotes either sin or misery, or both. The Apostle, *1 Pet.* ~~2~~ 18. calls a sinful Conversation, a vain Conversation. And *Job* 7. 3. terms those months of affliction and distress which he endured, months of vanity; I know sometimes it hath a more particular notation. Yet still such as falls under one of these two heads, *Sin* or *Misery*. Sometimes its put for deceitfulness, or falseness, and so *Psal.* 12. 3. *David* setting forth the deceitful, false speaking of the wicked, saith, *they speak vanity*. And because Idols do not answer the expectations of those who confide in them, the Prophet, *Jer.* 14. 22. speaks of them under the notion of vanities. And in regard worldly injoyments do not yield the satisfaction and contentment which men are apt to expect from them, *Solomon*, *Eccles.* 1. 2. speaks of them under the same term. Sometimes its put for fruitless, or ineffectual labour or pains which men take without receiving any profit therefrom: And so *Psal.* 78. 33. its said of the *Israelites*, *That God consumed their dayes in vanity*; exercising them with tedious peregrinations in the Wilderness, without bringing them into the Land of *Canaan*, toward which they were so long in going. Sometimes its put for temporariness or short continuance: And so *Job* 7. 16. tells us *his dayes are vanity*: that is of very short continuance. And sometimes its put for obnoxiousness to the several evils whereunto the inferiour Creatures through Gods permission, and

and mans tyranny, do lye open, ſo the Apoſtle, *Rom. 8. 20.* tells us, *how the Creature was made ſubject to vanity*: that is, to manifold abuſes and grievances. Thus, as I ſaid, the word *Vanity* hath ſometimes a more particular notation; yet ſtill ſuch, as falls under one of theſe two heads, Sin or Miſery. From which it is eaſie to gather what the deſign of the Holy Ghoſt in the Text is, when he tells us *that mans preſent ſtate is a ſtate of vanity*. We muſt from the account I have now given you, neceſſarily infer it is a ſtate of ſin or miſery, or both. And it were well for us, if it contained only one of them, either Sin without Miſery, or Miſery without Sin: But ſuch is the badneſs of it, that it contains both the one and the other, and that in a very high degree, as will appear hereafter in its proper place. The reſult then of this particular is this, that when *David* tells us, *mans preſent ſtate is a ſtate of vanity*; his meaning is, that it is a ſtate of Sin and Miſery. We exerciſe our ſelves in ſin, and God in love do's chaſten us, and in juſtice do's puniſh us for it: whereby it comes to paſs that our beſt days are evil days; according to that of the good Patriarch, *Gen. 47. 9.* *Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been.* Who (in thoſe times) lived either longer or better than *Jacob*? And yet ſuch was the nature of his days that they were both few and evil. And when we our ſelves have lived as long, and as well as ever we can, we ſhall have occaſion to give in the ſame account, and ſay, *Few and evil have*
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the days of the years of my life been. There is not any thing comprehended under the name *Vanity*, but it attends the days of the holiest and best men. Thus it all along hath been, and thus it will be to the end of the world.

2. Having shewed what vanity is, I shall shew you in what degree man falls under the charge of it, or how vain he is. Some account I have given you hereof in the opening of the Text, but that not being sufficient, I shall here do it a little more fully:
And,

1. *He is really vain.* Whether you look upon Vain as importing Sinful, or Miserable, or both; Man is really so. He do's not only seem to be so, but he is so: As sure as he is man, so sure he is vain. The same evidence we have for his existence, the same we have for his vanity: We cannot take any considerate, serious view of the one, but we must needs behold the other: What faculty, sense, limb, member, injoyment, concernment, belonging to him can we look upon, but we may see vanity as legibly engraven in it, as if it were writ with a beam of the Sun: *Psal. 62. 9. Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lye.* Surely; see how peremptory the Holy Ghost is in this matter. What thing do's he offer to us throughout the whole Word, which he prefaces with notes of greater certainty and truth than this? So that we are not to look upon this doctrine as a fiction, or device to work

is to mean thoughts of our selves ; but as a real truth, which whether we will or no, we shall find made out to us every day throughout our whole lives. For my part, I look not for that day during my whole life wherein Providence will not some way or other offer me that which in its own nature will be fit to convince me, that my present state is a state of vanity. How happy were we, if what we are told of this matter were a mistake, and that things were otherwise then they are represented ? Could we upon our awaking out of sleep find that what we are told concerning this matter were a meer dream, and that the state of things in reality and truth were otherwise, it would be an happy awaking for us, and deliver us from that sorrow and anguish under which we now labour : But alas, when we have slept and awak'd a thousand times over, and bethought our selves of all the arts and ways whereby we may escape the evil spoken of, we shall find our selves fast bound under the power of it. What man is there who if he had it, and might it be available, would not give mountains of Gold to be delivered from this truth ? But there is no thinking of any such things : when we have offered all the bribes, the whole world can furnish us with, to have it cancell'd and revers'd, we shall still find it in full force against us.

2. *He is universally vain.* This I shall amplify, and explain in two particulars.

1. *Every man is vain.* Vanity hath so diffused it self over the humane nature, that there
is

14 *The present State of Man,*

is not any rank, order, or degree of persons in the world exempted from it. Witness the forecited place, *Psal. 62. 9. Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lye.* Whereby we see that the vanity which hath befallen us, hath not confin'd it self to this, or that particular rank, or degree of persons, but hath most unhappily extended it self to all, so that there is none free from it. Let men be what they will, high or low, rich or poor, they are all infected with it, and labour under both the guilt and burden of it. Now this do's much aggravate the business. Had it confin'd it self to the mean only, we might perhaps have secur'd our selves from it by greatness: or had it been the lot of the poor only, we might have found some remedy in riches: But such is its universal nature, that it reaches to all, so that there is not any degree of blood, or place can preserve us from it: There never was man since the Creation who had not cause to complain of it; and there never will be man to the worlds end (though it were at a far greater distance than it may rationally be presumed to be) but will have cause to do the like. What age, or generation was there ever in the world that could afford a man, that was not in a state of vanity; or what age or generation is there like to be in the world which we may with any colour of reason expect it from? When once we have men set before us who are not in a state of vanity, we may cry out with the men of *Lystra, the Gods are come down to us*

in the likeness of men. Acts 14. 11. Should you call to the Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, Martyrs, to all the Saints in Heaven, nay to the whole deceased race of mankind, and ask them what their state was when they were on earth, they all either would, or at least might answer, *Oh it was a state of vanity.* And could you converse with the Generation yet to come, they would all give you an answer to the purpose, that this temporal state is a state of vanity.

2. *Every man is altogether vain.* He is so, not only in some mean degree, or respect, but he is altogether so. *Job 27. 12.* speaking to his friends of the inconstancy of the Hypocrite in the duties of Religion, faith, *Behold ye your selves have seen it, why then are you thus altogether vain?* Such is the vanity of man, that take him *extra gratiam Dei*, without the grace of God, as *Gejerus* expresses it, and he is wholly vain, so that there is nothing but vanity to be found in him. Look upon a poor unregenerate, un sanctified man, and what a despicable creature is he? He is vain in head, and heart, in soul and body, in life and manners, in all his undertakings, and in all his concernments. What thing belonging to him can any one offer to our consideration, wherein he is not altogether vain: Or what hath he that he can fasten his eye on, wherein he may upon good grounds take comfort? Nay, what hath he that is not a judgement to him, and matter of great sorrow? Such is the sadness of his condition that by how much
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the things he enjoyes are the best, by so much they make the more against him ; insomuch that take the choicest benefits; God hath given him, and he hath cause to bewail it, that ever he had them from him ; for as evil things prove good to him that is in a state of grace and holiness, so good things prove evil to him who is in a state of nature and sin. Thus it is with him who is unregenerate and un-sanctified, *his state is altogether vain*. And then for him who is a pious good man, though it go better with him, though he be in a way of cure and recovery ; yet in some respects, as I shall shew hereafter, his present state is altogether vain. Doubtless those inspired and good men, who tell us in Scripture, that the state of every man here is altogether vain, did not exclude themselves, or others in the same condition, but comprehend them. Is it to be imagined that when *David* in the Text from the contemplation of his own distress tells us *that every man at his best state is altogether vanity*, do's exclude himself? No, he proposes himself both as the occasion of what he saith, and as a special instance of the truth thereof. So that what we have asserted in this head, remains firm and clear ; that man is universally vain.

3. He is vain at the best state the world is capable of advancing him to. Even when he hath attain'd to the greatest confluence of outward things, he is then so far short of real, and substantial happiness, *that he is altogether vain*? When birth, youth, strength, beauty,
parts,

parts, wealth, honour, friends? do all unite and contribute their utmost assistance to render his state happy, he is even then exceeding miserable. When *Solomon* was in the very height of his magnificence and glory, and had even what ever his eye, ear, or heart could desire, Was he then free from a state of vanity? Could he then boast of true happiness? Could he then make any exception against the doctrine his good father had (as you have heard) in so many places taught? No, notwithstanding all his wisdom, pleasures, delicate works, houses, vineyards, gardens, orchards, pooles of water, multitude of servants, singing-men, and singing-women, instruments of musick, great wealth, and the like; yet he tells us *all is vanity, and vexation of spirit, and there is no profit under the Sun*, Eccles. 2. 11. Upon a strict inquiry into these things, he found not only that they were vain, but that he was vain in the enjoyment, and use of them. Alas then what hope is there for a man of attaining to a state of true happiness in this world? for though he may ascend to such an height as to possess himself of the wealth, honours, and pleasures of the greatest Prince on earth, even then he is so far from true happiness, that his state is as truly, and really vain as it was before. When *Solomon* was in the state of a child and Subject, his condition was vain: and when he had his fathers Crown, Throne, and Kingdom, and raigned quietly therein, in as much splendor and glory as ever any Prince in the world enjoyed, he found himself but at

the same pass, *Eccles.* 1. 12, 14. So that when the providence of God advances a man from a state of meanness to a state of greatness; we are not to look upon it as a translating of him from a state of vanity to a state of true happiness, but from one state of vanity to another. Nay, taking vanity (as indeed we ought) for the opposite of true happiness; that is, as importing sin, unholiness, trouble, discontent, and the like: And how much more do the great ones generally labour under it, than those who are in any degrees below them? Greatness is so far from securing the sons of men against vanity, that commonly the more greatness, the more vanity.

4. He is vain throughout the whole course of his life, even from the one end unto the other. Vanity is so deeply, and firmly rooted in his nature and life, that it attends him through the several periods thereof, down to his very dissolution and change. As the blood in its appointed circulation, runs throughout the whole body, so do's vanity throughout the whole life of man. Its born with him, pursues him, and follows him to his very grave. According to that of *Solomon*, *Childhood and youth are vanity*, *Eccles.* 11. 10. A very remarkable passage, carrying with it much strength and evidence; for it those more serene, and pleasant ages, wherein we are free from the decays, maladies, cares, we are usually exercised with, when we arrive at a grown and aged condition, be vanity, what can be expected afterwards? Children, and young

young people commonly pass away there time in much content and delight: But for persons of a grown, aged state, what complaints do we hear from them? How many grievances and vexations are they ready to give us an account of? Who ever lived to see forty years of age, that could not afford us a large Catalogue of his sins, burdens and troubles? 'Tis an observable passage of *Solomon*, *Prov. 24. 16.* *A just man falleth seven times and riseth up again.* 'Tis disputed amongst expositors, what is here the meaning of the just mans falling and rising? Some think we are thereby to understand his falling into, and rising from sin: So *Bede* and others. But this, *Grotius*, *Gejerus* and others are against, alledging the word **נָפַל** here rendred to fall, is never amongst the *Hebrews* put for falling into sin: and also that the taking of it in such a sense, suits not with the delign of *Solomon* in this place, whose business is to shew the calamities, and miseries that both the righteous and the wicked are incident to in this life: but withal, what priviledges the one have above the other; for whereas the latter plunge themselves into such misery as proves altogether exitial and destructive to them; it is not so with the former; they indeed fall, but yet so as to rise again. But whether we understand the place of falling into sin or misery, it comes all to one, as to what I alledge it for, which is to shew the great obnoxiousness, even of the best of men in this life to vanity, which is such, that they fall seven times; that is very frequently,

quently, or often : so that even their whole lives consist of sin and punishment for it : What day, what hour is there from first to last, wherein they have not cause to cry out, Oh the vain state of poor lapsed man ! Oh what evils are we incident to ! Oh what distresses have we involved our selves in ! And that which do's aggravate the business is this, that,

5. *He is vain unavoidably, and remedilessly.* This I speak still with reference to his present state and condition, during which there is no expecting to be delivered from the evils unto which he is obnoxious. God who sits in heaven, and rules the world, hath ordain'd, and design'd that his present state shall be a state of vanity, and notwithstanding all the arts and remedies that may be used to avoid it, it will be sure to prove so. I know, grace, the light of Gods countenance, and assurance of a future and better state, may do much towards the mitigating of the evils of this : But notwithstanding all, we shall still find it a state of vanity : Who more capable of finding it otherwise than *Solomon* ? Who in a fairer way for the Philosophers store than he ? Who in the world more likely to escape the severity of his father *David's* words than he ? And yet so far was he from it, that none hath said more for the vanity of man's present state than he himself hath done. What Chapter is there in all the Book of *Ecclesiastes*, (which seems to have been penned by him, in the time of his greatest wisdom and holiness, and when he was most capa-

capable of making a right judgment on things) wherein he do's not with greatest peremptoriness avouch the present state of man to be a state of vanity, and that without any means the whole world can afford of relief? This is his judgment and testimony in the case: and if that be not valuable, I know no evidence capable of yielding satisfaction in the case. We are all during this life, designed for a state of vanity, and bound up therein, and there is no way whereby we may extricate, or deliver our selves; but though we turn our selves which way we will, we shall still find our selves labouring under it. This I might farther make good here, but being loth to anticipate my self in my intended Method, I shall wave it for the present, and leave it to its proper place.

3. Having shew'd in what degree man falls under the charge of vanity, or how vain he is; I shall now shew in what respects he is vain. And,

1. He is vain in his soul, which is wofully depraved in the several faculties thereof, so that it is utterly unable to perform those functions it was once in an high degree qualified for. Oh what a curious piece was the soul of man before the fall! What rich ornaments was it then indued with! What thing in all the visible World was like unto it! But now it is in a far other state than at that time it was. Now it is so degenerated and altered, that it is vain in the several faculties and powers of it. But for the better discovering of this vanity of man in

respect of his soul ; I shall manage the business a little more particularly. And,

1. *He is vain in his Understanding*, which is full of ignorance, folly, and error. It was once a choice and precious lamp, affording a pure and shining light, fit to conduct and lead him in the several duties of his life ; but now it is full of darkness and error, apt to mistake in the plainest cases. Zophar speaking of man, faith, *Vain man would be wise, though he be born like a wild Asses colt*, Job 11. 12. An Ass is a foolish creature, insomuch that we use to call one who is a fool an Ass: yet Zophar likens man in his natural condition not only to an Ass, but to a wild Ass, nay to a wild Asses colt, which is one of the most stupid, silly things in the world. And what plentiful evidence do the several people in the world afford us of the truth hereof. Go amongst the heathenish Philosophers, even those who by study and converse, had raised themselves to a degree of knowledge and wisdom far above what what the common people had attain'd to, and how ignorant and blockish were they in the things of God ? How absurd and gross in their notions, touching Cœlestial and future things ? How divided in their apprehensions, and opinions ? Paul who by his great travels, had opportunity to be acquainted with them, gives this account of them, *That they became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkned: and that professing themselves to be wise, they became foolish*, Rom. 1. 21, 22. And in another place discoursing of them

them, he makes mention of the ματαιότης τῆς νοῦς αὐτῶν, or the vanity of their mind. Eph. 4. 17. They did indeed retain a νῦς, or intellectual faculty which was there τὸ ἡγεμονικόν, or guide in their affairs and proceedings, and which they so much celebrated, and cried up, but so miserably was it infatuated, and depraved, that there was little or nothing but vanity to be found in it. And this do's abundantly appear in their gods, sacrifices, worships, lives, which were such that they would never have owned or used them, had it not been that they had in a great degree lost their understandings, and were besides themselves. And if we go amongst the Jews, and enquire how things went with them, even whiles they were Gods peculiar people, how foolish and vain were they? Though for a supply of the defect of natural light, they were furnished with such as was supernatural, and that in such a degree, that there was no people which in that respect was like unto them in all the world: Yet what charge and complaints do's God bring in against them, as to their folly and ignorance? *The Ox knoweth his owner, and the Ass his masters crib, but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider,* Isa. 1. 3. Again, *My people is foolish, they have not known me, they are sottish children, and they have no understanding: They are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge,* Jer. 4. 22. And if we come amongst our Saviours own Disciples, who had the best Master in all the world, how stupid, and un-

teachable for a time were they? How averse to receive the instructions offered to them? How ignorant were they for a time in divers important points of Religion, such as our Saviours Death, his Resurrection, the nature of his Kingdom, and the like? which drew from our Saviour that severe exprobration, *Luk. 24. 25. Ob fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the Prophets have spoken!* And if we take notice of the whole body of Christians as they lye dispersed throughout the world, What ignorance and error do they labor under? In how many things do they differ, both from the truth and one another? Nay what abundance of darkness and blindness do's attend the most intelligent, and inlightned minds? *Now (saith Paul) we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face: Now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known, 1 Cor. 13. 12.* And if such inspired and extraordinary persons as the Apostles were, were so imperfect, and weak in their knowledge, What then may we imagine is the condition of such poor creatures as we are, who never had those special aids vouchsafed us from heaven, which they were blessed with? In a word, the mind of man, which heretofore was a region of sacred and heavenly light, is now become a meer sink of darkness, folly, and error; which do's much contribute towards the rendring of his present State a State of vanity.

2. *He is vain in his memory*, which is so frail, and treacherous in the matters of God,
that

that it presently loses those things which are commended to it. Whereas it should be a secure treasury of sacred truths, it presently lets them slip as if they were unworthy to be regarded. Hereof we have an instance in the *Israelites*, of whom it is said, *That they forgot Gods works, and the wonders that he had shewed them*, Psal. 78. 11. Though they were his works, and though they were wondrous, yet they forgot them. And as if this were not sufficient to discover their lamentable vanity, as to this particular, they went further, they forgot even God himself, and set up other Gods in the room of him. Hos. 2. 13. *I will visit upon her the dayes of Baalam, wherein she burnt incense to them, and she decked her self with her ear-rings, and her jewels, and she went after her lovers, and forgot me, saith the Lord.* This was both strange and sad: but what will not mans nature do, when it is once delivered up to a state of vanity? And this is an aggravation of its vanity, that whiles it is thus frail, as to spiritual, and holy matters, it is more tenacious as to those which are of an inferiour nature. Whiles the most important, and weighty truths are forgotten, a deal of putrid stuff, idle stories, and frivolous conceits, which tend to the corruption of manners are retained and preserved. Oh unhappy business, that ever a faculty designed by God for the retaining of high and sacred matters should be made to serve such bad ends and purposes! Were it not an unpleasant thing to see a rich Cabinet made the repository of
dirt

dirt and dung? Who would not be affected and moved with such a sight? Why, such a sight we have before us in the memory of man; for whereas it was designed for a Cabinet of sacred verities which were to be brought forth, and used according as occasion required, it is become the repository of little else but dirt and dung; that is to say, vitious, impure matter tending to pollute the mind, tongue, and life, and render them much more unholy and faulty than they are. Whereas it should minister to the mind in furnishing it (as there is need) with an account of those useful and profitable truths which have been commended to it; it do's instead thereof offer it a deal of frothy, vain stuff, tending to debauch it in those true and wholesome notions it is possessed of, and also to divert it from the contemplation and pursuit of better things, which is another particular thing wherein the vanity of man, in respect of his soul, do's express and shew it self.

3. *He is vain in his Affections*, which run out upon improper objects, and that with such vigour and strength, as is utterly unsutable to the nature of them. God hath propounded to us such things as are fit for our affections to work on, and as are worthy of their greatest fervor and heat; but instead thereof we place them upon other things which are of a lower nature, and are utterly unfit for them. He propounds to us himself, Christ, holiness, salvation, which are things of highest moment and were worthy of our affections, were they
a thou-

a thousand times better than they are: But instead of setting them upon them, we set them upon such trivial things as riches, honours, pleasures, which is a business so ignoble, and so far below us, that it is as if a Star should court a dunghill, or a beam of the Sun embrace a straw. The young man loved his Possessions more than Christ; *Mat* 19. 22. And some of the chief Rulers who believed on Christ, did notwithstanding, love the praise of men more than the praise of God, *Job*. 12. 43. And *Paul* foretells, that in the last dayes some shall love pleasures more than God, *2 Tim*. 3. 4. And alas! how do's the world even swarm with such as each of these? The sons of *Adam* are generally become Sons of *Belial*, without Government or restraint. Setting out some few holy persons who addict themselves to God, and the life to come, the whole world is set upon riches, honours, and pleasures, and that in such sort, that they but despise other things, how great, or desirable soever they are in comparison of them. It is exceeding sad it should be thus, and that which will ever remain as an instance of great the degeneracy of mankind. Were it a thing uncertain, the case were more tolerable, but it is not so: It is so notorious that there is no room either to deny, or question it: We may lament it, but we cannot either deny or question it. Besides the evidence we have of it in others, there is so much of this temper in our own hearts and practises, that we have all cause to sit down and say, Oh how vain a thing is man! How do's he misplace

place his affection! How do's he set them upon shadows and dreames whiles the greatest things which are every way worthy of them, stand by despised and rejected. This is a lamentation, and let it be for a lamentation. Having thus spoken of the Vanity of man, as to his interior part, we shall now consider what he is as to the exterior. And,

2. *He is vain in his Body*, which is subject to many evils, which render its present State very despicable, and uncomfortable. It's subject not only to cold and heat, hunger and thirst, disturbance and weariness, but likewise to diseases, pain, sickness, weakness, death. What Physitian in the world, is so skilful as to give us a full account of all the maladies and distempers the body of poor man is lyable to? Upon the sin of our first parents, God passed this sad and heavy, yet just and deserved sentence, *Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return again*, Gen. 3. 19. And *Tirinus*, with others, tells us, that the very moment wherein *Adam* sinned, he was visited with a *Phtibisis*, or consumption of the inwards, whereof he all along languished, and after dyed. Whether this be true, or no, I shall not now inquire, but this is certain, that ever since that unhappy business which was done in *Eden*, man hath all along laboured under a world of maladies and distempers, which before he was free from. One, with the *Shunamites* Son, complains of his Head, 2 *King*. 4. 19. Another, with *Jeremy*, of his Bowells, *Jer*. 4. 19. Another, with *David*,
of

of his loins, *Psal.* 38. 7. One is exercised with the Stone, another with the Gout, another with the Palfie, and every one with either one malady or other. One we have groaning in his chair, another in his couch, another in his bed. Oh the dolorous nights and tedious dayes that the poor Sons of men endure! Oh their restless tossings and turnings! Oh their heart-breaking sighs and complaints! In the evening they cry out, would God it were morning, and in the morning, would God it were evening, *Job* 7. 4. Notwithstanding the rapid and swift motion of the Sun, yet through the greatness of their extremity, how slow do they think its progress? They are ready to say of it, as the mother of *Sisera* did of her Son, *Why is his Chariot so long in coming? Why tarry the wheels of his Chariots?* *Judg.* 5. 28. How negligent do they think the Clock, how long the hours? What house, chamber, bed, is there that hath not been a witness of what I now say? Nay, how ordinarily are the sons of men brought to such misery, that being impatient of their lives, they do even court death and the grave? Who was ever blessed with greater magnanimity and patience than *Job*; and yet what a do did he keep with the grave to take him and close him up? *Job* 17. 14. *I have said to corruption, thou art my father, to the worm, thou art my mother and my sister.* So great was his misery, that having taken leave of his Relations and house, he claims kindred with corruption and the worms. As when we have

occasion to use persons, and crave their assistance, we commonly claim kindred with them: so *Job* having a desire, that corruption and the worms would take him into their society, he thus claims kindred with them. The words imply as much as if he had said, I had indeed other kindred, but they being less suitable to my condition, I have taken my leave of them, and now desire to be own'd and entertained by you. Oh what dismal and unpleasant thing's the vanity of mans present state put him upon desiring! What more distastful to flesh and blood than Corruption? What more unpleasant companions than the Worms? Yet sometimes his extremity is so great, that it puts him even upon the desiring of these things. And when man hath been exercised here with extremity a season, death comes and puts a period to his life, and so he is carried forth to his grave, and there left to dwell and converse with his new kindred, corruption and the worms, with whom he is to continue till the heavens be no more. And herein the hand of Providence is so steady, and vigorous, that there is no resisting of it. Whether we be for it or against it, to the grave we must go, and there abide. Should we all fall down on our knees, weep the eyes out of our heads, and sigh till our hearts are ready to burst, in order to the preventing of it, yet could we not prevail. *What man is he that liveth* (saith the Psalmist) *and shall not see death? shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave?* Psal. 89. 48. And saith *Job*, *I know that thou wilt bring*

bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living, Job 3. 23. Both which places hold forth thus much, that as death is the portion, so the grave is the habitation appointed for all the living. And what thing is there in the world that is more evident? Where are those vast numbers of people that lived in the world before us? Where are those thousands of young flourishing Gallants, that in their prosperity despised death, and derided the grave? In what place do they remain, or what is become of them? Are they not now fast under the power of those things they once scorn'd and slighted? Oh how fully are they now convinced of their own folly, and how far are they from the presumptuous conceits they formerly maintained within them? Oh how much is the State of man altered from what it was in innocency? Then he was in a sort immortal: so that as *Austin* teaches, *Poterat non mori, He might live, and not die:* But now the case is otherwise, now he is absolutely mortal, so that, *non potest nisi mori, he cannot but he must needs die.* This is sad, but yet if God will hereby make way for a better State, then either of the former wherein *non potest mori*, a State wherein he may be wholly immortal, and above the power of death, it will do well.

3. *He is vain in respect of his worldly designs and hopes.* He hath an active head, and a working heart, and according as he apprehends his interest lies, so he imployes and laies out himself. And inasmuch as through the blind-

blindness and error of his mind, he thinks his interest lies in possessing himself of the riches, honours, and pleasures of the world, he forms various designs and projects for the furnishing of himself therewith. He contrives this, and the other way for the raising of himself in the World, pursues it with care and diligence, and promises to himself much felicity and comfort therefrom: and whiles he is entertaining himself with apprehensions and thoughts of this nature, the Providence of God comes like an armed man upon him, and presently spoiles him of those vain hopes he had so much pleased himself with: One man layes out himself one way, another, another way: one laies out himself in purchasing, another in improving, another in building, and each promises to himself much success and contentment; but alas! before they are aware, they are stop'd in their design, and all falls to the ground. According to that of *Job* 17. 11. *My daies are past, my purposes are broken off, even the thoughts of my heart.* Whereas he purposed to do this and the other thing, in order to the rendring of him prosperous and happy in the World, and had possessed his heart with some pleasant apprehensions hereof, the Providence of God engages against him, and disappoints him. With which agrees that of *David*, *Psal.* 146. 4. where speaking of man with reference to his death, saith, *His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth: in that very day his thoughts perish.* But how do they perish? What, do's he then lose his cogitative

gitative faculty? Do's he from thenceforth cease to think? No, the meaning is, that his designs and projects, and the expectations and hopes which he had raised therefrom, become ineffectual and fruitless. And how many are the instances which the Scripture (to go no farther) affords us hereof amongst projecting, and designing men? How famous is the case of *Nebuchadnezzar*? Dan. 4. 29, 33. *At the end of twelve months he walked in the Palace of the Kingdom of Babylon. The King spake and said, is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the bouse of the Kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my Majesty? While the word was in the Kings mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O King Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken, The Kingdom is departed from thee. And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field; they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the most high ruleth in the Kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will. The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar, and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his bairs were grown like eagles feathers, and his nails like birds claws. Oh strange and affecting passage! Where observe, 1. The extream arrogancy, and pride of this man. Though *Daniel* from the vision which the King himself had seen, had declared unto him, that by vertue of a decree of the most high, He should be driven from men, and his dwelling should*

be with the beasts of the field, and that he should eat grass as oxen, and the like; yet the execution hereof through Gods great patience being delaied, he walks in great Majesty and state upon the roof of his Palace (which according to the flat building of those times he was capable of doing) and from thence taking a view of the City, he cries out, Is not this great *Babylon* that I have built? One would have thought his own vision interpreted as it was by *Daniel*, and Gods patience for a whole year should have had better influence on him. But what outward means are there, which either can, or will prevail, unless God set in with them, and bless them? But see how his pride and vain glory transports him into mistakes? He speaks as if he had built the City, whereas it was *Nimrod* that built it; after which *Semiramis* enlarg'd, beautifi'd, and strengthn'd it: yet in regard he erected some edifices, hanging gardens, orchards, walls, he talks as if he were the only Author and Founder of it. And from this his present greatness, he promises himself, not only an exemption from the vision, but likewise great felicity and prosperity. But 2. see his remarkable disappointment and downfall. It's said the same hour the thing was fulfill'd upon *Nebuchadnezzar*, and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, &c. Oh what a sad disappointment was here! How far did he fall short of what he aimed at? How miserably did his thoughts perish? First he becomes a beast in respect of his disposition or manners, and then God makes him a beast in respect of his condition

condition or outward state. First he is mad with pride, and vain glory: and then God in just judgment strikes him with another kind of madness, so that being bereaved of his understanding, and thereby rendred unfit for Kingly rule and dignity, he betakes himself into the wilderness, and there for seven years lives like a wild beast; after the expiration whereof, recovering his understanding, and humbling himself before that God, whom he had by his pride offended, he returns to the Government of his Kingdom. Oh how dangerous a thing is it, for the greatest persons to lift up their heads against God! How soon can he divest them of their greatness, and ruine them in their designs, and hopes? An instance like unto this, we have in the spiritual, or modern *Babylon*, Rev. 18. 7, 8. *She saith in her heart, I sit a Queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death and mourning, and famine, and she shall be utterly burnt with fire.* Whiles she suggests, she is as happy as may be, and promises to her self, that she shall be so still, without interruption or disturbance, she is brought to utter desolation and ruine: and as for other reasons, so for this in particular, that she put such confidence in her present state. And our Saviour, Luk. 12. 19. 20. brings in a rich man saying *Soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.* But God said unto him, *Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?* What reckoning did this man make

of his great possessions? How wealthy did he imagine himself to be? And what strong felicities did he promise himself from those good things God had bestowed on him? But whiles he is congratulating himself in the apprehensions and hopes of his future contentments, he is cut off and bereaved of all, and so he and his hopes fall to the ground at once. And how many thousands have there been in the world to whom it hath thus hapned? After they have taken a deal of pains in forming such and such contrivances and ways for the furthering of their worldly interest, ingaged themselves in the diligent pursuit thereof, and promised themselves much happiness therefrom, they have been suddenly cut off, and utterly bereaved of what they made full account to enjoy. How many have we our selves known, who after they have erected such a building, purchased such an estate, made such a bargain, got themselves out of debt, or done some business from whence they promised themselves much happiness, have been suddenly taken away, and thereby disappointed of those comforts they made such reckoning of? This is a case that falls out so frequently, that there is no man who hath any acquaintance with the world, but he can afford us various instances thereof.

4. *He is vain in respect of his Labours and Endeavours.* Upon the fall God denounced this curse against him, *In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread*, Gen. 3. 19. And this we every day see fulfilled in all places wheresoever we come. One layes out himself in one employ-
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ment, and another in another : one drives on his interest this way, and another that ; and each in such a way as he thinks fittest to serve himself. Eccl. i. 8. *Solomon saith, All things are full of labour, man cannot utter it.* And as it was then so it is now : insomuch, that it is even unpossibible to expresse the great, the various, the tedious labours wherewith the sons of men exercise themselves. When we look about us, and take a view of their proceedings, What a bussle and hurry do we find them in ? Some are busie upon the Sea, others at Land : some in their Shops, others in the fields, and every one promises himself much advantage from the way, wherein he is ingaged. Like a company of Ants, they run up and down, and hasten to and fro, and every one is in chase of a particular interest, from which he makes account to receive, not only that which will countervail his pains, but yield him very much happinefs. Now what is the use of all this labour and bussle ? Do's it render the Authour thereof happy ? Alas no, it yields nothing but disappoyment and vexation. Who more likely in regard either of interest in God or his own wisdom, to direct his labours to a good issue than *Solomon* ? Who knew better how to manage them than he ? And yet how ineffectual his labours were, and how far they were from answering his end, he himself shews, *What profit (saith he) hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the Sun ? Eccles. i. 3.* Again, *then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour I had laboured to do : and behold all was vanity and vexation of spirit,*

and there was no profit under the Sun. Yea, I hated all my labour which I had taken under the Sun: because I should leave it unto the man that shall be after me Eccles. 2. 11, 18. So that notwithstanding all his wisdom, parts, diligence, labours, they were so far from answering his ends, that they were unprofitable, vexatious and hateful. And he was not herein alone. How wise a people were the Jews, and yet to how little purpose did they imploy their labours? Wherefore (saith the Prophet) do ye spend money for that which is not bread and your labour for that which satisfieth not? Isa. 55. 2. And thus it was with the Babylonians, Jer. 51. 58. Its said, They laboured in the fire; that is, their labour amounted to no more than only the creating of fewel to feed the fire. They took pains to make a fire to burn themselves. There labour was so far from making for them that it made against them. And how hard did the Disciples labour, and yet to how little purpose? Master (saith Peter) we have toyled all the night, and have taken nothing Luk. 5. 5. But what need of particular instances? How great are the labours of many amongst whom we live, and yet to how small an account do they bring them? Oh how thoughtfull and carefull are they? What arts and projects do they use? What diligence and pains are they at? How early do they rise and how late do they go to bed? How restless and unwearied are they in the pursuit of their business? And when all is done, their labours signify no more, than that they have kept a great deal of stir to little or no purpose; for either their

their labours yield increase, or not: if not, they are evidently in vain. If they do, what is the increase which they yield, what does it amount to, what can it do towards the rendering of them truly happy? no more than a little air can do towards the filling of a mans purse, or a little wind can do towards the satisfying of his appetite or stomach. So that whether mens labours yield increase, or not, the issue is still this that they are in vain.

5. *He is vain in respect of his possessions, and enjoyments.* He takes a deal of pains to get an estate, and when he hath it, he is vain in the enjoyment of it. If it be small, he is vain: and if it be great, he is notwithstanding vain; so that let it be what it will he is still vain. If he live, and enjoy it himself, he meets with discomforts in it: and if he die and leave it, he knows not who will have it, or what use will be made of it after he is gone. Perhaps it falls into the hands of a wise man: and if it do, what great matter of satisfaction can it be, that he hath transmitted to him an heap of vanity, which perhaps may make him both a fool and a beast? But it may be it falls into the hands of a fool, that will be as prodigal in spending it, as he was industrious in getting it. Nay it may be it falls into the hands of one that will not only prodigally spend it, but likewise deride him, both for his care and pains in getting it, and his frugal living upon it. Now this must needs render a man very vain in that estate Providence is pleased to bestow on him, and intrust him with. This

David urges in the verse following the text? surely every man walketh in a vain shew, surely they are disquieted in vain: he heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them; that is, so as to possess and enjoy them. And this Solomon his son renders as the reason wherefore he hated all the labour he had taken. Eccl. 2. 18, 19, 20. Yea (saith he) I hated all my labour which I had taken under the Sun, because I should leave it unto the man that shall be after me. And who knoweth whether he shall be a wise man or a fool? yet shall he have rule over all my labour wherein I have laboured, and wherein I have shewed my self wise under the Sun. This is also vanity. Therefore I went about to cause my heart to despair of all the labour which I took under the Sun. And no marvel, for admit a man have a plentiful estate, what comfort can he take in it, when he do's not know, but he who succeeds him may spend it to the dishonour of God, the disgrace of religion, and the everlasting shame of himself who hath taken pains for it, and conveyed it to him? He may perhaps use it well, but withall it is to be considered that he may do otherwise; he may imploy it to the promoting of wickedness and vice, and the eternal undoing of himself and others. And when a man thinks of this what an allay must it needs be to the complacency he might otherwise have in what he enjoys, that it may, for ought he knows, after his decease, be imployed to such bad ends, and purposes? In these five particulars I have evinced to you that man is vain: and might have
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have instanced in some others, but these are sufficient to make good the point before us, which is, that the present state of man is a state of extream vanity.

4. Having in what went before shewed in what respects man is vain, or how far the vanity which is in him hath diffused it self, I shall now give you an account how he came to to be thus vain. And.

1. This is come to pass, partly through the proceedings of God with him in the business of Creation. He having supream rule, and liberty might make him in what fashion he thought, and dispose of him to what State he pleased. As the Potter hath power over his clay to make thereof what vessels he sees good, so had God power over the whole stock of mankind to dispose of them to what state he should think fit. *Rom. 9. 21.* Now in pursuance of the rule and liberty belonging to him, he made him indeed happy, but it was not unalterably but mutably, so that he remained at his own free will and choice either to stand or fall. Upon which account the vanity he labours under at this day, is in some sort to be ascribed unto God; not as a fault (that without blasphemy is not to be imagined) but as the just exercise of his own liberty, who not being bound to make him unalterably happy, might make him otherwise. So *Job 5. 7.* Man (saith *Eliphaz*) is born unto trouble as the sparks fly upward. In the Original it is, □ 7 N as if *Eliphaz* had said that *Adam* who was our first parent (and his offspring

offspring) was born to trouble. As the sparks those sons of the coal (as the Hebrew phrase is) were by the Law of Creation designed to fly upward, so was *Adam* designed for trouble. And if he were designed for it, what can his posterity expect? This the *Psalmist* is so affected with, that he expostulates with God about it and saith, *wherefore hast thou made all men in vain?* *Psal.* 89. 47. so our translations render it, but in the Original it is *על מה שרא בראת כל בני אדם*, *wherefore hast thou created all the Sons of Adam in vain, or in vanity, or to vanity?* mark, created: the word in the Original is the very same with that, whereby *Moses* sets forth the creation of our first Parents. *Gen.* 1. 27. so that according to the *Psalmist*, man was in some sort created in a state of vanity, which he here makes bold to reason with God about. Taking a serious view of the affliction and mortality of man, he makes bold to expostulate with God about it, and enquire of him wherefore he had disposed of him to such a vain state. Not that he meant in the least to impeach God upon it, or to reflect upon the stupendous and noble work of our creation but to inform himself of the true reason of it, that so he might the better comply with the will of God in it, and do his duty. God was at his own liberty in our creation: he might have made our condition better, and he might have made it worse, and therefore our business is not to censure, or find fault with him, but to acquiesce and submit, and take care that we perform the duties which such a condition

condition calls for. He might indeed have ordered things far otherwise then he hath done : he might have made every Cloud a Star, and every Star a Sun, and every Sun a thousand times bigger and brighter then that we now have ; but he hath thought good to manage things otherwise, and who is there that may find fault ? And as we are to reason thus as to other creatures, so we are to do it as to our selves : he hath disposed of us to a State of vanity, and we must bow our heads, and submit.

2. This is come to pass partly through the malice and activity of Satan, who having undone himself, and envying the happiness of man, who was once in a condition below him, solicited him to eat of the forbidden fruit, whereby he knew he would incense God against him, and provoke him to throw him out of that state of Happiness wherein he then was, into a state of Distress and misery. That he should thus seek the ruine of an impotent creature, who had no way offended him was a piece of extream malice, and wickedness, and such as will remain an argument of the great degeneracy, and baseness of his nature to all eternity. However, he attempted it, and not without too much success. *The Serpent* (saith the Apostle) *beguiled Eve* through his subtilty. 2 Cor. 11. 3. Behold here the early policy of this wretched Spirit ! That he might carry on his work with more security, he disguises himself, enters into the serpent, a poor innocent creature, from which no evil at that time was to be suspected, and so falls into a treaty with
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the woman, urges her to eat of the forbidden fruit, and most unhappily prevails upon her and overcomes her, to the undoing of her self, husband, and posterity. Under the sad fruits of that unhappy intercourse, we all groan and sigh to this very day, and so are our posterity like to do successively, even to the worldsend.

3. This is come to pass partly through mans sinful complying with Satan, and deserting the state wherein he was created. Though it was (as you have heard) a mutable state, yet it was a state of marvellous happiness, and such as he both had liberty to abide in, and stood greatly bound to do it. But alas, he early deserted it, and thereby threw himself down from a state of great (though uncertain) happiness, to a state of great and certain misery. So that God may say to him, as was said to the King of Babylon, *How art thou fallen from Heaven O Lucifer son of the morning? Isa. 14. 12.* Oh what high and noble qualifications was he once indued with? what communion and fellowship had he with God? How fit was he for his work and service? But it continued thus but for a season: by that time he was well possessed of that happy state God had put him into, he threw himself out of it, and involved himself in a state of sin and misery, which his Posterity remains in at this day. And the truth is, it was just with God when we would not be content with such an happy state as that wherein we were, to cast us into a far worse, and thereby shew us the meaning of our unthankfulness and folly.

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4. This likewise comes to pass partly through the inability of the creatures which God hath put into subjection to him, and intrusted him with the use of, to yield him any considerable happiness. Were the creatures free from vanity themselves, he would be more happy in the injoyment of them: but alas herein he is distressed, that those things which should lift him up above a state of vanity, are vanity themselves, what vain things are silver, and gold, houses and lands, sheep and Oxen? what can they do towards the rendring of one who is vain in himself, happy? They may indeed puff him up with high conceits, and fill him with strong imaginations, but they cannot make him happy, Could they have made him happy, what an happy man had *Solomon* been? for what a mighty confluence had he thereof? yet so far was he from being truly happy in them, that we have no man who makes such complaints of disappointment in that case as he do's. And it cannot with all rational and sober persons but be a great argument of the vanity of such things, that those who have the greatest share of them are commonly the furthest from satisfaction. Indeed *David*. *Psal.* 144. 15. speaking of such as have plenty and abundance of earthly things, saith, *Happy is that people that is in such a case, yea happy is that people whose God is the Lord.* So our translators render it, but the Syriack turns it interrogatorily; is the people happy that is in such a case? which do's greatly alter the sense, holding forth that such a people are

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not happy, no, by no means: but those rather who have God for their Lord. But admit we are to read the words as our translations offers them to us, divers things are to be said. As 1. Those people which have such abundance are happy *judicio vulgi*, in the judgment of the common people, who value those outward things at such a rate as if true happiness consisted in the enjoyment of them. So *Mariana*, and others. Or 2. They may be said to be truly happy, but then it is not meerly because they enjoy such things, but because they are a sign of Gods love to them whose favour renders those happy who are the objects of it. Which yet is to be understood in a peculiar manner of the *Israelites*: for God, having promised them all manner of temporal good things upon their obedience, their receiving and enjoying thereof was to be looked upon as a token of his gracious acceptance of them and their service. Thus *Muis*: but whether this holds as to others, who have no such special promises of temporal good things made to them, is to be considered. But 3. Whatever the sense of the former part of the verse is, there seems to be a correction or revocation in what follows, *yea happy is that people whose God is the Lord*. As if the Psalmist had expressed himself thus; I said indeed that those who have such earthly things are happy, but I should rather have said, they are happy who have him for their Lord who is the fountain and Doner of such things. So *Gererus*. In a word, earthly things may afford some

some small transient happiness but they cannot afford us any thing like true happiness neither can they afford us any competent relief against the vanity of our present state. This appears in this, that the wisest and soberest men who have been the meetest judges in the case, have declin'd them and turned their backs upon them. *Agur* desires God he will not give him riches, *Prov.* 30. 8. And when God seemed to offer *Moses* as great riches, honours, and pleasures as any Nation in the world did afford, he refuses them, and betakes himself to a course and state wherein he was like to meet with great afflictions and troubles, *Heb.* 11. 24, 26. Now is it to be imagined that wise men would ever decline the great things of the world, and turn their backs upon them when offered to them, in case they apprehended they could contribute any thing towards the increase of their happiness or the bettering of their condition? No, we may rather make account (especially, they being so grateful to flesh and blood as they are) they would pursue them with all intentness and diligence, and leave no stone unturned, whereby they might procure them. The summ then of these particulars is this, that God, satan, man, and the creatures under his power, do all in a sort conspire and unite in this conclusion, that the present state of man shall be a state of extream vanity. And oh poor man, how unavoidable, and incurable is his vanity (during this present state) like to be, when such great powers and forces do concur to the effecting of it! Had only one of these appeared in it, it would

would have found him work enough : But that Heaven, Hell, Earth, God, Devils, mans own self, and the creatures he is possess'd of, should all joyn against him, and concur to the promoting of his vanity, how sad must his condition needs be !

I. Use. Having dispatch'd the Doctrinal part of this discourse, and therein shewed the meaning of vanity, how vain man is, in what respect he is vain, and how he came to be so ; I shall now descend to the Uses. And the first may be for information, to acquaint us with these following heads, which result as so many particular inferences from the general point: And,

I. If man be so vain, or in such a state of vanity as you have heard ; then what a wonder is it that the great God, who is Lord of Heaven and Earth should have such regard to him as he hath, and concern himself in his welfare as he do's. So low hath poor man brought himself, that hee's become a very heap of sin and misery. Under what sad and affecting terms do's the Scripture represent him to us? According thereunto, as to his spiritual state, he is a Rebel, *Isa.* 30. 9. a Traitor, *Mal.* 2. 11. Miserable, *Rom.* 7. 24. Undone, *Isa.* 6. 5. And then as to his temporal state, what a despicable thing do's the Scripture make him? According thereunto he's a Shadow, *Psal.* 109. 23. a Worm, *Psal.* 22. 6. Dust and Ashes, *Gen.* 18. 27. And what a sad and pitiful thing must that creature needs be, whose nature and condition is such as falls within the compass of these terms ? What words can
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be used which may render the state of a creature more vile and contemptible? In case you would sink a creature down into a state of greatest baseness and distress, what terms could you use, whereby you might do it with more advantage? There are two things which concur to the rendering of his condition extreamly unhappy: first his sin, and that renders him detestable; then his Misery, and that renders him despicable. Now, that notwithstanding both these, his Sin and Misery, his detestableness, and despicableness, the great and holy God should stoop so low as to take care of him, and concern himself in his welfare and happiness; is that which we are to look upon as a piece of rare and wonderful condescension. Its condescension in him to take notice of the things that are in Heaven. This the Psalmist expresses with no small emphasis and affection, *Who (saith he) is like unto the Lord our God, who dwelleth on high: who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven?* Psal. 113. 5, 6. In the supream heaven (for of that as Dr. Hammond thinks the Psalmist here speaks) there are matters of an high nature: There are blessed Saints, holy Angels, fountains of joys, rivers of pleasure, and things so glorious that they cannot be uttered; and yet it is a piece of wonderful condescension in God to stoop so low as to take notice of them. Oh then what is it for him to take notice of such poor trivial things as we are, who labour under so much sin and misery? What are the best of us, but a little animated clay, or living dust, ready every hour to resolve into putrefaction

and rottenness. And yet notwithstanding this; the great God should look after us, and concern himself about us, is that which may for ever exercise our admiration and wonder. This holy men have been so affected with, that they have even been astonished at it. *Job* having discoursed of his own afflicted and miserable state, he cries out, *What is man that thou shouldst magnifie him, and that thou shouldst set thine heart upon him?* *Job* 7. 17. As if he had said, Lord the State of man being so despicable and miserable as it is, how comes it to pass that thou takest notice of him, so as to contend with him and afflict him? As he is unworthy to be accounted thy friend, so he seems altogether unmeet to be thine enemy. For thee to make him thine adversary, and thereby take him, as it were, into competition with thy self, argues thou makest greater reckoning of him than he deserves. Alas, such is the meaness of his condition, that he is unworthy thou shouldst trouble thy self with him, or be concerned about him. And that thou art pleased to keep such a do with him, is that which fills me with no small admiration. And to the same purpose is that of *David*, *Psal.* 8. 4. where upon his contemplation of the Heavens, the Moon, and Stars, and his considering them to be the work of God's hands, he cries out, *What is man that thou art mindfull of him, and the son of man that thou visitest him?* Taking a view of the Heavens and considering their spaciousness and vastness, their rapid and orderly motion; and also taking a view of the Cœlestial bodies, and considering their

their magnitude, light, and influence; and then weighing with himself, that God was the maker and disposer both of the one and the other, he breaks forth into wonder that ever God should have such regard to poor man, and yield him such respect as he hath been pleased to express to him. And certainly there is nothing in all the world which in its own nature is more apt to beget admiration than this very thing. That God being so exceeding high and lifted up, and man being so impure and despicable, God should notwithstanding shew him such respect as he hath done, is that which may exercise our thoughts. That notwithstanding all his unworthiness and baseness, God should set his heart upon him, send his own dear Son out of his bosom to redeem him, favour him with a Covenant of grace, intrust him with so many pretious ordinances, give him dominion over the creatures, and make such provision for him, both as to his holy and comfortable living here, and his obtaining and injoying of highest bliss and happiness herereafter, is that which will ever remain a wonder. Had man been an holy Angel, for God to have shewed such respect to him, had not been so considerable: but for him to be such a creature as he is, and yet to do it; nay to pass by the fallen Angels, and after their rejecting to express so great respect to a creature of an inferiour nature, whose present state is so exceeding vain, is that which we are never to mention without wonder and praise.

2. If man be in such a state of vanity, then this shews us what little reason men have to carry their heads so high, and behave themselves so loftily and proudly as they do. A low condition and an high spirit are bad companions. There is nothing more unseemly, or provoking. And yet how ordinarily do we find these two united in men? How frequently do we see an high spirit attending on a low condition? How miserable are the generality of men, and yet how well do they think of themselves? What a graceless, unsanctified wretch was the Pharisee, and yet how do's he boast of his own righteousness? *Luk. 18. 11.* And what a distressed state was the Pastor of the Church of *Laodicea* in? He was wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked: But how far was he from thinking any such thing? He was so far from that, that he looked upon himself as rich, and increased with goods, and having need of nothing. *Rev. 3. 17.* And such as the apprehensions of men are, such is their carriage. How contemptuously do they carry themselves both towards God, and one another. As for God, notwithstanding all his greatness, Majesty, and Glory, how light do they make of him? *Who (saith Pharaoh) is the Lord that I should obey his voice? Exod. 5. 2.* And as for their brethren, how do they despise them? They make no reckoning of them they do but puff at them *Psal. 10. 5.* And then for the good creatures of God which he hath given them for their sustentation and use, how do they slight them and trample upon them, as if they were altogether below them, and unfit for

for them? This thing is not good enough for them, and the other thing is not good enough for them, whereas there state is such that they deserve nothing at all. What choice food was the Manna God vouchsafed the Israelites in the Wilderness? Such was the delicacy of it, that the Psalmist calls it Angels food *Man* (saith he) *did eat Angels food*, Psal. 78. 25. So our Translations, as well as divers others, renders it: But the word in the Original is *אֱבִירִים* which *Bootius* saith is never used of Angels; but still of great, and eminent men. And so the sense is this, that God in furnishing the Israelites with Manna, gave them such food as was fit to be set before the greatest and eminentest men, even Princes and Nobles. Notwithstanding this, how little did they value it? *Our souls* (say they) *loatheth this light bread*, Num. 21. 5. Not being of such a substantial, solid, nature as the food they had in *Egypt*, they contemn'd and despis'd it. And nothing is more ordinary with carnal men, than when God out of his bounty hath furnished them with such accommodations as are a thousand times too good for them, to disdain and slight them, as utterly unworthy to be made use of, or regarded by them. Now what do's this high, contemptuous carriage in men discover, but that they are unacquainted with their present state? Nay, what do's it but discover, that their present State is a State of vanity? For, for men to be so miserable, and yet to carry themselves so highly and proudly, is not only an aggravation of their own misery, but an evidence of it.

3. If man be in such a state of vanity, then this shews us what little reason men have to esteem so highly of, and to be so much in love with their present state. Were it a state of true happiness, they might with more reason esteem of it, congratulate themselves in it, and be pleased with the thoughts of its continuance: but it is much otherwise, its a state of extream vanity. I told you in the beginning the meaning of vanity: it still imports either sin, or misery, or both. And such is the nature of mans present state that it comprehends both these.

1. Its a state of sin, which is the greatest evil, and the worst thing in all the world. Would you say the worst of a person, or thing you can, you must call it sinful, which of all Epithets continues in it the greatest evil. The Apostle therefore having occasion to speak of sin, and wanting a word to reach its nature, without making use of any paraphrase or circumlocution, describes it by it self. By the *commandment* (he tells us) *sin becomes* *ἄθ' ὑπερβολῶς* *Exceeding or transcendently sinful, Rom.*

7. 13. The nature of some things is so odious, and so well known, that it cannot be set forth by any name so well as by their own. Would a man set forth the loathsomness of a toad how could he do it better than by telling you it is a toad, the thing it self being become so hatefull to us that it is usually made the illustration of what is so? And thus it is in this case: such is the odiousness of sin, and so well is it known, that there is no name so fit to describe it as its own. When we have to do with a matter that

is full of evil, and can meet with any thing which is known to have more evil in it, or which is known to be equal to it in evil, we may describe it by that, but when there is nothing which reaches it, then we must describe it by its self. Now this is the nature of sin that it exceeds all other evils: and that in this respect that as it is most contrary to the nature, will, and interest of God, so it is the cause of all other evils, so that whatever evil we meet with, or endure, it results therefrom. Notwithstanding which, how do we abound with it in our lives? such is the pravity, and vitiousness of our natures that we are apt to be overcome by every temptation, and miscarry upon every occasion. There is an habitual, settled aversness in us to good, and proneness in us to evil, by the strength and power whereof we are even continually offending. What period of our our age, what condition, ordinance, duty, undertaking, performance have we not filled and polluted with sin? who (*saith David*) *can understand his errors? Psal. 19. 12.* There is no man so good but he hath his errors, and that in such a degree that they exceed his understanding. We have all of us exercised ourselves so long in erring that we understand not what we have done. Our errors are so many that they cannot be numbred, so great they cannot be measured, and so vile that they cannot be expressed. And hereby we are become obnoxious to divine justice, and liable to everlasting damnation. And things being thus, how should our present state choose but be a state of vanity?

2. Its a state of misery. We sin, and God in justice punishes for it. We fill our lives with impiety and error, and God fills them with misery and trouble. We have found out various methods and ways whereby to offend and provoke him, and he hath found out as many methods and ways wherby to afflict and disquiet us. *Few and evil* (saith Jacob) *have the days of the years of my life been,* Gen. 47. 9. And (saith Job) *Man that is born of a woman is of few daies and full of trouble.* Job. 14. 1. And (saith Moses) *all our daies are passed away in thy wrath.* Psal. 90. 6. So that according to the sentence of these three great, and famous men, evil, and trouble, and wrath are the attendents of those days we live here in the world. It is but a little, little while we are to continue here. By that time we are well got into the World, we are going out. Our Cradle stands so near our graves, that the one is ready to receive us from the other. And as if this were not sufficient to prevent our being fond of our present state, that little, uncertain time we do abide here, is attended with very many and great afflictions. Oh the distressed condition of poor Mortals! How unhappy and miserable are we! One is afflicted one way, and another another way. One is afflicted in his Soul, another in his body, another in his name, another in his relations, another in his estate, another in his affairs and some in several, nay in all of these, but to be sure all in some or other of them where is the man that hath not his particular grievance? Where is he that can say I am free
from

from affliction? I know God do's proceed variously with men, afflicting some spiritually, and other corporally, some more, and others less, but yet where is the man that is altogether free? Could your ears but reach through the Earth, and hear the many hideous cries, and sad complaints that are therein, you would be so far from making any question of what I now say, that you your selves would break forth into cries and complaints, and say Oh, the miserable condition of the Sons of Men! Oh the strange afflictions that do attend them! Oh the heavy and sore troubles they are exercised with! Now this being the nature of mans present state what reason hath he to set his heart upon it? what reason hath he to affect it, or be pleased with it? He that can love such a state as this, can love that which is not only a state of sin, but a state of misery.

2. *Use.* If this be so, that the present state of man is such a state of vanity, then it may be useful to us by way of Lamentation to stir us all up to bewail our selves upon the account of the sad condition wherein we are. There was a time when our state was a state of happiness, during which we were free both from sin and misery, bathing our selves in the streams of Paradise, injoying sweet communion with God and delighting our selves in those high and noble contentments he was then pleased to favour us with. Then we had neither sin to grieve us, nor misery to annoy us. We had then none of that ignorance, unbelief, hardness of heart that now we are troubled with; we had then none of that

that pain, sickness, weakness, that now we labour under. Such was our state then, that we had no evil either of one sort or other to disquiet or trouble us, but were even as happy as our very hearts could wish. We had then no occasion of lamentation, or sorrow. We had then nothing to do, but to contemplate the perfections of our Creator, hold communion with him, and praise him for his goodness to us. But Oh how is the state of things altered! Imitating the fallen Angels, we left our first state, and sunk our selves down into a state of extream vanity. That Star which stood shining in an high and pleasant orb, is now fallen down into a dunghill, and become the object of derision and scorn. Oh how great was our happiness, but how short was our continuance in it! many learned and judicious writers think that man fell the very same day he was created. *Hugh Braughton* is confident in it that he continued not a whole day in his innocency: and tells us from *Maimonides* that all the *Jews* are of one opinion, and that the Greek Fathers go the same way. And the modern Greeks their common maxime touching this matter is ἡ ἡμέρα ἐπλάσθη καὶ ἐξελάσθη, that he was formed and deformed one and the same day. And the Psalmist tells us, *Psal.* 49. 12. That *man being in honour abideth not* So our translators render it, but it may be rendred *Adam* being in honour lodgeth not in it. Whereupon some will have it to be spoken with reference to the first man, who they think remained so small a time in Paradise that he did not so much as lodge

lodge one night in it. But this some look upon as uncertain, others as unprofitable. *Gataker* in his *Cinnus* disputes against it, urging the things which were done betwixt the creation of man and his fall, which he thinks required more time then one day for the effecting of them. However this is undeniable that mans continuance in his happiness was very short. Admit he continued in it till the next day, or till that day seven night, or till the thirteenth day, or forty days, or twenty years, as some have imagined, what's that in comparison of the time that hath passed since the creation? Nay in comparison of the time he would have remained in it had he not fallen. Oh how sad a thing was it that he should be put into such a state of happiness, and thrown so soon out of it! But he may thank himself for it: for had he continued in his obedience, he had also continued in his happiness, but deserting the one, he was deservedly thrown out of the other, which was a thing of such unhappy influence both to himself and his posterity, that we have all cause to sigh and mourn under it whiles we have a day to live. Oh where is our ancient glory, what is become of our makers image, where are those pure and spotless excellencies we were once endued, and adorned with? Oh where is our primitive knowledge, righteousness, and holiness? what is become of our peace, health, and immortality! where are all those happy contentments, we were blessed with? Alas, they are all gone, and we miserable upon the account thereof. And things being thus, what remains but that
with

with the Israelites declining our ornaments, and cloathing our selves in Sackcloth we sit down in the dust and bewail our selves? If upon the loss of a friend, or some outward temporal injoyment, we weep, sigh, and wring our hands, what then should we do upon such a loss as this. which is enough to break any mans heart that understands it, and make him go mourning to his grave? Were this matter well considered, what lamentation would it cause in all houses, streets, and places? What shedding of tears, and wringing of hands would there then be? What a valley of *Bochim* or Mourners would the world then become? We should then hear all persons crying out alas, alas! Wo unto us for we are spoyled! And, wo unto us for we are undone! We indeed were happy, but would not remain so, and now we must bear the smart of our ingratitude and folly. And that which aggravates the business, is this, that we have not only lost the happiness we were possessed of, and brought our selves into a state of present misery, but (which is a thousand times more considerable) have rendred our selves lyable to a state of eternal misery. Might our lives and misery end together, our loss (though great) were not comparable to what it now is: but it is far otherwise; when we have lived here a life of great misery and troubles, we shall then (if special grace prevent not) enter upon a life far more insupportable and grievous. Poor, ignorant people use to say their condition is so bad here, it will sure be good hereafter: And oh happy were it for them might it so prove!

But

But it is not present misery will excuse us from future. When we have here lived the most afflicted, uncomfortable lives, we shall then (if grace prevent not) enter into a condition a thousand times more tormenting and grievous. And oh that men would consider this, and lay it to heart! Oh that they would weigh what happiness they have lost, what misery they have already brought themselves into, what farther misery is yet before them, and that they would be duly affected therewith! But alas, this is one part of our misery that we are not sensible of our misery: whence it comes to pass that whereas we should bewail it, and seek for relief against it, we remain securely and contentedly in it. Such is the regardlessness of the poor birds, that they are often feeding, nay playing when the fowler is taking aim at them, and so lose their lives, whilst they might with greatest felicity preserve them. And thus it is with men: such is their regardlessness of their welfare, that they eat, drink, play, loyter, trifle, when justice is directing its arrows against them, and so perish whilst they might (if they would bestir themselves as they ought) escape and do well. Oh that the gracious God would open the eyes of men, awaken their Consciences, teach them compassion towards themselves, that they may look after their own safety, and not suffer them to go on, adding sin to sin, and misery to misery, till they are past help and recovery.

3. *Use.* If it be so, that the present state of man is such a State of vanity, then it may be useful to us by way of Exhortation, to put us
upon

upon the discharge of the following Duties,
And.

1. Let us be base and vile in our own eies, abhor our selves, and repent in dust and ashes. Lets take a view of our vanity in all its dimensions and aggravations, be ashamed of it, and loath our selves for it. What, vain really, universally, in the best condition, all the life long, and remedilessly (during this present state) Oh doleful condition! What, vain in soul, body, designs, labours, possessions, Oh heart-breaking tydings! What wall is there that hath not a *Mene tekēl* upon it? Which way can we turn our eies, or what can we look on, but we may read our own vanity? If we look within us, we find our selves full of vanity, and if we look without us, we find our selves composed with it: So that let us turn our selves which way we will, we find it still before us. If we turn to the one hand, we see our sin: if to the other, our punishment. If we look this way, we see our folly and wickedness: if the other, our distress and misery. There's not a bit we eat, a drop we drink, or an hour we live, but death is ready to arrest us, the grave to receive us, and eternity to swallow us up. And is this to be looked upon as a small matter? Oh no, this is an affecting business. This is that which may make the proudest gallants in the world to throw off their bravery, cloath themselves in black, and hang down their heads to the ground, saying, Oh poor creatures, what a sad condition are we in? How have we been mistaken in our selves? We thought we had had a
moun-

mountain that would never have been removed, that we had had goods laid up for many years, that we might without care or regard, have eaten and drunken and been merry, and that to morrow would have been as this day, and much abundantly: But alas, we see we are in a mistake, we are already in a state of vanity, and know not how soon we may be in the grave and hell! Oh that men were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end! *Deut. 32. 29.* This is not a business fit to be slighted, or disregarded: No, it is such as calls for our most serious thoughts, and deepest resentments. And if things be at this pass, we are to consider what manner of opinion we are to have of our selves, & what manner of respect we are to bear toward our selves; Whether we are to honour or despise, affect or abhor our selves? Were our state a state of happiness, we might esteem of, and bear respect unto our selves in a way answerable to it: But being its a state of extream vanity, which we have by our own folly and wilfullness brought our selves into; what remains, but that we even despise and loath our selves as a company of fools, who preferred a state of vanity before a state of happiness? When a person that is possessed of a fair and plentiful estate, do's by his prodigality and vice consume and wast it, and make himself a beggar, with what indignation and disdain do men look upon him? What a fool and a beast do they count him, that to please his lusts, would throw himself out of such a condition of plenty and honour, into a condition of poverty and dis-

disgrace? Nay, and many times such a person himself when he comes to consider things a little, and weigh what his condition was, and what it is, looks upon himself with the same eye, esteeming himself as no less than mad, that would go and bring himself into such distress and misery. How ordinary is it for a man when he hath play'd the Prodigal, and comes to himself to loath and condemn himself, nay to be ready to offer violence to himself, that he should be such a fool, and have so little regard to his own welfare? And is not this our case? Have we not played the Prodigals, and that in matters of a thousand times higher nature than those of the World? Have we not sinned away that fair and goodly patrimony that our heavenly Father was pleased to bestow upon us? Have we not ruined and undone our selves? Have we not thrown our selves from a state of happiness and honour, to a state of misery and shame? What then remains but the suting our apprehensions and affections to our carriage and demerits, we look upon our selves as a company of fools, who by our prodigality and madness, have undone our selves, and upon that account despise, and loath our selves?

2. If it be so that our present state is a state of vanity, then let us endeavour to alienate our hearts from it, and become dead to it. Were it a state of happiness we might like it and love it, and endeavours the securing of it to us: But being a state of extream vanity, what reason have we to set our hearts on it? *David* hath an earnest expostulation with the sons of men
about

about this matter : *How long* (saith he) *will you love vanity ?* Psal. 4. 2. If it be proper for us to love such things as temptations, sin, sickness, weakness, pain, dishonour, trouble, death, and the like, then we may love this present state, but if otherwise, then it concerns us to lay a restraint on our selves as to this particular. To this purpose is that of the Apostle, *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world: if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him,* 1 Joh. 2. 15. If God favour us with the good things of the world, such as health, strength, liberty, peace, riches, honour, we are to be thankful for them, and take care we make good use of them : but we must not set our hearts on them. They do not make any such alteration in our state, as we imagine. If we have a lesser portion of that, our State is a State of vanity : and if we have a greater portion of them, even the greatest abundance, we are still at the same pass, our State then likewise is a State of vanity. If we gain the things of the world, we gain but vanity, and if we lose them, we lose but vanity : If we have them, we have but vanity, and if we are without them, we are but without vanity : So that whether we gain them, lose them, have them, or are without them, our State is still a State of vanity. And shall we go and set our hearts upon vanity ? No, lets never be guilty of so much folly and weakness. Let not either men or Angels have occasion to charge us with any such indiscretion or madness. If we will be bestowing our affections, lets do it upon such things as are worthy of

them. It is observable how happily *David's* practise agreed with his Doctrine: It was he, you know, that furnished us with the point I have been insisting on: And how did his affections work towards his present State? Did his Doctrine and practise clash with each other? Had he any great value for that condition which he represented to be a State of vanity? No, *Surely*, (saith he) *I have behaved and quieted my self as a child that is weaned of his mother: my soul is even as a weaned child*, Psal. 131. 2. So our Translations renders it, but in the Hebrew the words run in the form of an imprecation, *לֹא שוֹיֵיתִי* if I have not behaved, &c. As if he had said, if I have affected great things, as my enemies suggest, then let me be dealt with accordingly. For the occasion of the Psalm (as *Muis* notes) seems to be this, that some of *Saul's* Nobles charged *David* with an affectation of the Kingdom, and an aspiring after great things. Hereupon he makes his appeal to God, and draws him to witness, whether he were guilty of any such thing, praying that if he were, he would avenge himself on him, and punish him for it. Some, conceiving there is an Apotopesis in the words, suppress the imprecation: but others mention it, thinking it is contained in the word *שָׁמַרְתִּי* which they render, *reward*: As if *David* had said, if I have done any such thing, let God reward my soul accordingly, or let God recompence it upon my soul, or let God deal with me in a way answerable thereunto. But whether Interpreters do suppress the imprecation, or mention it, this is evident, that

that there is one implied in the word which affords great Emphasis to them. The words imports as much as if the Psalmist had said, Lord, if I have been guilty of any such ambition as my enemies charge me with, then let me be disappointed, let me lose thy protection and favour, nay, let me for ever perish. By this you see how his Doctrine and practice agreed. As he taught that the present State of man is a State of vanity, so he carried himself towards it accordingly. *Sauls* servants thought he had thirsted after the Kingdom, and such like matters, but they were mistaken. Even as the child that is weaned, disregards the breast, so did he the things of the world. He had *Sauls* Crown, Throne, and Kingdom before him, but he valued them not any farther, than he might serve the Counsel of God, and be useful to his interest. He saw such emptiness in them, and all worldly things, that he made light of them. And if we will carry our selves like wise men, we must do the like. Taking a view of the things of the world, and weighing the extreame vanity thereof, we must keep our hearts at a distance from them. And inasmuch as our present State in regard of the inability of the things of the world to make it otherwise, is a State of vanity; we must in like manner keep our hearts loose from it, and not suffer them to be enamoured with it. There is not any such desirableness in it, that we should let them out upon it, and therefore looking upon it as an unfit object for them, we must reserve them for such a State as is worthier of them.

3, If our present State be such a State of vanity, then let's look out after, and labour for an happier and a better State. By how much we find this State the worse, by so much we should take the more pains for a better. The worse the house is we live in, the more we lay out our selves in providing one that is more commodious. And thus we are to proceed in the present business. The more vain and inconvenient we find our present State, the more we are to concern our selves in inquiring after, and seeking for an interest in a better. That there is a State of happiness, and that it is a desirable thing to be in it, is a principle so deeply rooted in Nature, and so generally acknowledged by mankind, that I shall not give any one thanks to grant it. Men may as soon cease to be men, as abolish out of them either the general notion or desire of happiness. I know men differ great'y in their apprehension of happiness, some conceiving it consists in this, others in that, yet all agree both that there is a State of happiness, and that it is desirable to be in it. And for the mistakes which the sons of men labour under concerning it, God hath afforded us relief in his word, especially in the Gospel, whereby Jesus Christ hath (as the Apostle teaches) *brought life and immortality to light*, 2 Tim. i. 10. The world had some notice of it before, partly from the light of nature, partly from the writings of the Prophets; but that was only a small hint, in comparison of what Christ by himself, and his Apostles, hath afforded us in the New Testament. . . Therein he do's not only
declare

declare that there is such a state, but likewise urges us, and that with great importunity to seek after it, and labour for it. *Seek you first (saith he) the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you. Mat. 6. 33.* And, *strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many I say unto you will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. Luke 13, 24.* And, *Fight the good fight of Faith, lay hold on Eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses. 1 Tim. 6. 12.* O how good is God, that to relieve us against this state of vanity, hath been pleased to provide for us a state of happiness: and oh how ungrateful, and unworthy were we, if we should not so far comply both with his kindness and our own welfare, as to endeavour to to attain to it! what were this but to withstand God, and our own Salvation at once?

But you'l say, I believe there is a state of happiness, and am desirous of it, and would gladly enjoy it, but what must I do to attain to it?

Ans^w. For the directing of you herein, I might treat you with many particulars, but I shall offer you only these few. And,

1. If you would attain to a state of happiness, look up to God with an eye of faith, so as to cast your selves upon him through Jesus Christ, both for the delivering of you from your present vanity, and the raising of you up to a state of glory and blessedness. He hath a better state to prefer you to, and if you will but look up to him with an eye of Faith, he will

both intitle you to it, and in his own due time give you possession of it. So graciously hath he ordered things for us that the state of man by Christ, is in some respects better than what it was in innocency. To this purpose is that *Rom. 5. 17.* *If by one mans offence death reigned by one, much more they that receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one Jesus Christ.* Here the the Apostle sets the second *Adam* over against the first, and shews that the former was not so able to work death, but the latter is more able to work life. The words imply as much as if he had said, if the first *Adam*, who was but a meer man were able by his sin to work death, and give strength and power thereunto, how much more is the second *Adam* who is God, and able by his righteousness to work life? Nay he is so far from being unable to equall the first *Adam* herein, that he is able to raise us up to an higher, and nobler life than the state of innocency afforded. Indeed the life which that state afforded was a pleasant and sweet life, but it was far short of that life which Christ hath purchased for us. That life was of a more terrestrial, sensual, uncertain nature, but this is such as is celestial, spiritual, and eternal. The difference betwixt them is so great, that there is no comparison betwixt the one and the other. So that our fall through Christ is so far from being prejudicial to us, that it hath conduced to our greater happiness. The selling of *Joseph* into *Egypt*, you know, made way for his advancement: and so our fall through Christ hath

hath made way for our greater happiness. Oh how good is God that he hath not only provided a remedy against our fall, but thereby made way for the lifting of us up to a better state! Well, this happiness which God in Christ hath provided for us, and which is so exceeding great we must seek to attain to in the use of those means he hath prescribed, amongst which this is one, that we should with an eye of Faith look up to him, upon the doing whereof, he hath promised to bestow it on us. *Isa. 45. 22. Look unto me* (saith he) *and be ye saved all the ends of the Earth.* So our translation renders it, but in the Hebrew it is *והשער*, which *Pagaine* renders in the future tense, *Salvi eritis*, ye shall be saved. But whether we take the words in the imperative or future tense, they imply as much as if God had said, whosoever throughout the whole Earth will look up unto me with an eye of Faith, owning me for the true God, and casting himself upon my mercy in Christ Jesus, for justification and acceptance, he shall be saved. And this is one of those means he hath prescribed, in order to the delivering of us from our state of vanity, and the raising of us up to a state of happiness.

2. If you would attain to a state of happiness, then carry your selves holily during this your state of vanity. I told you in the beginning, that the present state is a state of exercise and service: and according as you behave your selves, herein God will deal with you as to a state of happiness. Though he be marvellously gracious and liberal in bestowing of happiness,

yet such is the purity of his nature, that he will not grant it unto any but such as are holy. Such is the indispensable necessity of holiness to the obtaining of happiness, that let men be what they will, if they have not holiness they cannot arrive at happiness: without it, the Apostle tells us, *no man shall see the Lord. Heb. 12. 14.* So much do's God stand upon holiness, that according as men are furnished therewith, so he deals with them, as to their eternal condition. On the one hand, let their degree in the World be never so high, yet if they want holiness, they must never come to happiness: and on the other hand, let their degree in the World be never so mean, yet if they have holiness, they are sure to be happy. And therefore as ever you mean to be happy hereafter, see that you are holy here. Now for the preventing of mistake, and that you may the better secure your selves of holiness, I shall in a few words acquaint you what holiness is and wherein it consists. And it is such a quality as imports separation, or devotedness to religious uses. It consists in a withdrawing of our selves from common and profane matters and a giving up our selves to the worship and service of God. We may know what sanctified or holy persons are, by knowing what the things are which fall under that denomination. Sanctified or holy things are things which are separated from common uses, and devoted to such as are religious. And so Sanctified, or holy persons are such persons as withdrawing themselves from profane and common things, do give up themselves to God, and the serving of
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of his will and glory. *Know* (saith *David*) that God hath set apart him that is Godly [*or holy*] for himself. *Psal.* 4. 3. Whereby we see that a godly or holy man is one that is set apart for God, to attend on him, and minister to him in the duties and waies he hath prescribed and appointed. And there is such necessity of our being thus set apart, and addicted to God, that there is no expecting happiness without it. If we will withdraw our selves from common uses, and addict our selves to communion with God and his service, we may attain unto that happiness he hath designed for his sanctified, and holy ones: but if neglecting him, we give up our selves to the pursuit of the World, and the sinful practices thereof, instead of being delivered from the present vanity under which we labour, we must make account to enter into a state a thousand times more sad, and grievous. Instead of passing from a state of vanity to a state of happiness, we must look to pass into a state of superlative, and extream misery. And how sad is the condition of that man whose portion here is vanity, and whose portion hereafter must be superlative and endless misery?

3. If you would attain to a state of happiness, then go to God in prayer, and beg earnestly of him, that he would not put you off with this present state, but advance you to a better, wherein you may be liker to him, and hold sweet communion with him. To live all our lives long in a state of vanity, and after pass into a state of endless torment, oh what heart which is not become a stone, would not dissolve
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into sighs and tears to think of it ! What, after all our temptations, sins, pains, sicknesses, weaknesses, crosses, troubles , to enter into a state which is infinitely more vexatious, and insupportable, Oh what soul that is not become mad and desperate would not be affected with it ! As ever then you would let the World see that you are in any compleat measure solicitous about your own good, seriously consider what a vain state your present state is, and how much worse the state is, which after this you must enter into, if divine grace do not prevent and endeavour to get your hearts, and souls truly affected therewith, and beg of God that he will have mercy on you, and afford you relief as to this particular. And whereas he hath been pleased to provide a better state than either of those mentioned before, intreat him with all the importunity you can possibly raise your Souls to, that he will be pleased at the present to interest you in it, and in his own due time take you into it. Though it be no small matter to deliver you from the vanity of your present State, and the danger of a worse, and to take you into a state of happiness; yet such is the respect he bears to the ordinance of Prayer, that to those who in a due manner exercise themselves therein, he hath promised to do it for them. How often hath he declared in the Word, *That whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved?* Joel 2. 32. Acts 2 21. Rom. 10. 13. This frequent asserting of the thing, is partly to shew us the certainty of it, and partly to
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work us to a firm belief of it, and stir us up to the duty of Prayer, which through the grace of God is of such efficacy, that it is able to raise the soul from earth to Heaven. Notwithstanding the vast distance there is betwixt Heaven and earth; yet if you will in a believing, serious, affectionate manner call upon God, own him in his several perfections and intreat him to take you up thither, he will do it. Thus he dealt with the good Patriarchs: they desired a better Countrey, and he prepared for them a City. *Heb. 11. 16.* Though *Canaan* was a good Land, a Land that God had blessed, a Land that he had his eyes on from one end of the year to the other, a Land that ever flowed with milk and honey, that is, abounded with what ever was necessary for humane sustenance and refreshment; yet they found such inconveniences in it, that being unsatisfied with it, and all other Lands, places, and injoyments in the world, they intreated God to furnish them with some other place which might better agree with those holy principles and affections he had planted in them, which he in compliance with their desires was graciously pleased to do. And if we take the same course that they did, we may make account he will deal with us after the same manner he dealt with them. The way to go to Heaven in our persons, is first to go thither in our hearts and prayers. Send up therefore your prayers first to Heaven, and they, as it were with Golden cords, will draw you up after them.

And thus I have given you an account of some of those means which God hath prescribed towards

wards the helping of us to a State of happiness. And oh how much are we indebted to him, that he is pleased to deal with us upon such easie terms! What, will such easie matters as Faith, Holiness, and Prayer, help us to happiness, who then would not betake himself to the pursuit of it? How worthy is he to remain in a state of vanity, and from thence to pass into a State of extream misery, that will not use such means to be delivered therefrom? When we had sunk our selves down into a State of vanity, and rendered our selves lyable to everlasting misery, God might justly have let us alone, and left us to spend both time and eternity in fruitless sighs, and groans: but out of his transcendent grace he hath dealt better with us: he hath provided a remedy for us, not only against our present vanity, but likewise against our future misery. Now if we should not make use thereof, especially it being so easie, how worthy will all the world judge us to perish? All I shall further add is this; you have yet, Sirs, your understandings, and are capable of distinguishing betwixt good and evil: and though you are at the present in a State of vanity, and are lyable to such a State as is far worse; yet through the grace of the Gospel, you may be freed from the one, and escape the other; and what you are to do in order thereunto, I have in a few words shewed. If you prefer happiness before misery, you may do well to close with the Counsel given: if otherwise, you may contemn and reject it, and go on in your secure and extravagant courses; but if ere you allow your selves such liberty, you may

may do well to consider, whether you may not have cause to repent, when it is too late. The Lord of Heaven, who is the Authour and disposer of true happiness, Bless what hath been said, and make it effectual.

SERMON II.

Psalms 73. 23, 24, 25, 26.

*Nevertheless I am continually with thee :
Thou hast holden me by my right
hand.*————

IT is a Controversie amongst Expositors, who was the Penman of this Psalm, whether *Asaph* or *David*; for without question it was composed by one of them. Indeed the Title as it stands in our Bibles, gives it clearly to *Asaph*: but we are to know, that in the Original $\eta\sigma\alpha\phi$ which may be rendred either of, or to *Asaph*. However, it is generally believed to have been penned by *Asaph*: and the reasons that have induced the generality of Expositors to believe it, are such as these, (1) It appears that *Asaph* did compose some Psalms, 2 Chron. 39. 30. *Hezekiah commanded the Levites to sing praise to the Lord, with the words of David and of Asaph the Seer.* So that it appears some Psalms composed by *Asaph* were
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Canonical, and of use in the Church, as the 74, 76, 77th, and some other Psalms: Some think he composed this, the ten following, and so others. (2) The *genus dicendi*, manner of speaking seems to be more sublime, and obscure than that of *David*, whose discourses seem to be more simple and plain. (3) Its expressed to belong unto *Asaph* under the same form in Hebrew that those which were penned by *David*, are expressed in, as belonging to him.

The Psalm it self contains an account of the conflict *Asaph* was in through his beholding the prosperity of the wicked, and the adversity of the godly, that which hath been a great stumbling block in the world. Look into the word of God, and you shall find that it hath very much exercised the thoughts of the righteous, and *Seneca* the Philosopher, canvasseth this grand Case, how it should come to pass that the wicked prospered. This much exercised the Psalmists thoughts: One while he resented it one way, and another while another: One while he was satisfied, another while unsatisfied: One while his spirit was calm and quiet, another while tumultuous and restless. Like the ship in the boisterous wind he is tossed up and down not so high now, but as low anon. Yet notwithstanding the distressed condition this good man was in; notwithstanding the various apprehensions he had concerning it: yet he still adheres and keeps close to God. *Nevertheless I am continually with thee.* In these words, being the former part of the 23 v. There are two things observable.

1. His tumultuous and sad condition, sometimes God exerciseth his own dear servants with much distress, both in body and mind, and thus he dealt with *Asaph*.

2. His adherence to God, and communion with him. Though his temptations and difficulties were such, that he was even overwhelmed; yet he still keeps close to God, as knowing that (if there were any true safety, and rest to be had in the world) it was with him. Here we are to note there is a twofold being with God. There is a being with him in respect of his care, and protection; and there is a being with him in respect of fellowship and communion. Now I conceive, when the Psalmist saith, *nevertheless, I am continually with thee* he aims at both these: however I shall for the present discourse of the words with reference only to the latter.

Doct. That it is the property of pious, and holy men to be with God, or to have their abode with God, or to live in communion with God. Though the world do generally neglect him, and live at a distance from him, scarcely so much as thinking of him, it is not so with pious and holy men; they do not only think on him, but prefer him above all, and spend their time with him. *Phil. 3. 20. For our Conversation is in Heaven.* He exhorts them to an imitation of him, and his fellow Apostles, which he inforceth with this reason *1 Joh. 1. 3. That ye may have fellowship with us, and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his son Jesus Christ.* Some keep com-
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pany with one, and some with another: but good men they keep company with God. All persons that have not lost their reason, have a reverence for a Divine and heavenly life: this, saith he we have to commend us to your acceptance, that our conversation is in heaven, and invite you to the imitation of us, that have our fellowship with the Father, and the Son.

1. I shall lay down some propositions to make way for a better understanding of the point.

1. Man upon his Creation, while he remained in his innocency lead a Divine life, enjoyed sweet communion with God, and lay as it were in his very bosome. He then knew not what it was to stand at a distance from him, lie under his displeasure, or bear his wrath. There was then nothing to interpose betwixt God, and him, or interrupt him in his communion with him. Had his state been as certain, and constant as it was pleasant, and comfortable, oh how happy had he been!

2. By his fall he deserted God, placed himself at a distance from him, and grew strange to him, *Gen. 3. 23 24.* The case was quite and clean altered, as to the state of things. God, that before the fall had man in his Arms, there hugging him with delight, and tenderness, now he drives him out of the Garden as worse than a beast, not fit to be there. He that had communion with his Maker is turned out, and the Angel set to keep him out, that he might not eat of the tree of life. He go's away from his Father as the Prodigal, pleaseth himself in his distance from God, lives

in a far country, hides himself from his presence, riots it in voluptuously entertaining, and indulging the flesh. And herein the propagation of Original Sin, and the great degeneracy of our natures do's appear, that we are all by birth at a distance from God, and strangers to him, *Psal. 58. 3. They go astray from their birth*: as soon as they be born, they are found at a distance, and strayed from God. And this is true not only of reprobated ones; but the elect too; yet with this difference, that whereas the former persists therein, the latter do not; but in time reurn to him, become acquainted with him, and fall into familiarity with him.

3. God in his great love to his elect and chosen, is pleased to look after them in their far County, take them off their estrangedness to him, and bring them into a state of Communion with him. Whiles they are ingaged in their prodigal wandrings from him, he calls after them, lays hold on them, shews them their way and duty, and brings them home to himself, *Isa. 30. 21. Thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.* There shone a Light about *Paul. Acts 9. 3, 4.* And what the Prophet had said was in a more illustrious manner confirmed, *suddenly there shined round about him a light from Heaven.* You know how *Paul* carried it to Christians; how he held it to be his duty to imprison the faithful; how he ingaged in his hellish hot service of persecution,

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night and day ; how when he was in the height of his carreer , and came near *Damascus* a light shined. He was in darkness, and God gives him light. He heard also a voice saying unto him, *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* He tells him that he was Jesus whom he persecuted. This was the voice behind him, saying, *This is the way walk in it.* What meanest thou, *Saul?* Wilt thou thus offend the God of Heaven? wilt thou harden thy heart, and blind thine eyes against that light and evidence, that I have given, to shew by infallible signs, that I am Jesus the Saviour? Wilt thou boldly, violently, and dangerously, go on to affront the dearest love, and clearest light, that ever was manifested to the World, that unquestionable, and irresistible authority and power, by which if thou be not ruled, thou wilt be ruined. *It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.* Consider what thou art about to do, that which will shew thy madness, and beget thy sorrow. Thus poor *Saul*, that confesseth after, that he was exceeding mad, is overwhelmed, falls on the earth, and cries to him whom he had blasphemed and unmercifully persecuted in his members. Lord what wilt thou have me to do? I know thou wilt have me to do something as well as desist from what I was wickedly about to do. I will do what lies in me, I have engaged in what I could against thee ; but now I will do what I should for thee.

4. He causes them thus returned to behold an amiableness in him, and to delight, and take pleasure in him. He discovers to them such
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glory and excellency in him, and affords them such refreshment and comfort in the enjoyment of him, that they account it their happiness that they may be with him. Oh (says a good man) that I were with God ! I cannot live without I may be with him. Cant 2. 3. *As the apple tree among the trees, so is my beloved* (saith the Church) *among the sons. I sate under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet unto my tast, &c.* Even as your spreading trees yeild a pleasant shadow, and the apple tree a pleasant fruit ; so Gods presence yields much refreshment and repast unto his people.

(2) When or in what degree pious and holy men are with God ? And they are with him very much, so that according to the liberty used in the common manner of speaking they are said to be ever with him. Psal. 139. 18. *When I awake I am still with thee.* A good man as he concludes the day with God, saying, *Lord into thy hands I commend my spirit ;* So he doth likewise begin the day with him ; no sooner do's he open his eyes, but he looks up towards heaven, acknowledgeth the goodness of God the night past, and craves it for the day approaching : so Luk. 15. 31. *Son thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine.* Oh happy Son, that might have such familiarity with his good father ! And oh wise Son that when he might have it would make use of it !

3. What pious and holy men do while they are with God ! How they do imploy and exercise themselves ?

1. They contemplate and view his perfections. They view him in all his Attributes and properties, in his wisdom, power, goodness, glory. *Mat. 18. 10. Their Angels do always behold the face of my father which is in heaven:* where observe, (1) What relation the Angels stand in to the faithful, according to *Luk. 15. 31. They are ever with God.* Let not any of the pious be disconsolate, *The Angels are Ministring Spirits sent forth.* Oh the wonderful goodness of God! How highly hath he advanced poor men! (2) What the Angels do, *They behold the face of God,* that is enough to make a continual banquet unto them. This is partly to view his perfections, and partly to receive instructions from him. This is it which pious men do. They behold the face of God, they view God in those rare and infinite excellencies, that are in him, in his mercifulness, goodness, and holiness. *I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help,* *Psal. 123. 1.* This is the posture of an holy man, he is looking up to God from whom cometh his help.

2. They admire him and adore him, as the supreme Being, the highest Lord, the chiefest good, and the only object of religious worship, *Exod. 34. 8.* They bow before him as *Moses.* You read before how the Lord descended in the cloud, becomes his own Herald, proclaims his own greatness, *The Lord, the Lord God merciful and gracious.* — *Moses* hereupon doth reverence and adore this merciful and glorious God, *bows his head,* as if he should say, What glory is here? What incomprehensibleness, and incomparable-
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ness of glory and Majesty is here? So *Rev. 5. 14.*
The four and twenty Elders fell down and wor-
shipped him that liveth for ever and ever.

3. They rejoyce and glory in him as their portion and treasure. Herein they esteem themselves happy, that they have such a God, and that they may be with him. Oh saith the godly man, what a God is here? Not such an one as the Calves at *Dan* and *Bethel*. This is a privilege indeed to have such a God, an interest in him, that I may be intitled to him, that I may be one with him, and be still with him. In this a man may boast. *My soul doth magnifie the Lord, and my spirit rejoyces in him, Luk. 1. 46.*

4. They treat with him in the behalf of their souls, and their eternal welfare and happiness. They consider their own condition, weigh the terms he hath proposed of reconciliation and peace, and with all cheerfulness submit to them, *Matth. 19. 16.* When all controverlies come to an end, this will be the great Question which the young man propounds, *What must I do to inherit eternal life? What wilt thou have me to do?* saith *Paul*; and a gracious person inquires, which way he might get nearer to God, nearer to Christ.

5. They exercise dependance on him for a seasonable and happy deliverance of them out of the several temptations straits and troubles wherein they are. A good man when he is with God, saith, Thou Lord rulest the world, thou hast brought me into these troubles, thou only canst bring me out of them, and on thee do I depend for the doing of it. *Psal.*

86. *Mans Communion with God.*

123. 2. *As the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their Masters, and as the eyes of the maiden unto the hand of her Mistress: so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God until that he have mercy upon us.* The good man hath his eyes up to God in way of dependance, to attend how long it will please him, they shall be under exercise and service, and waiting for the issue and end thereof. This I conceive the Psalmist hath respect unto in the Text. *I am continually with thee*, not only that I may have thy care and protection; but that thou wouldst determine those troubles, that I am waiting and groaning under, and that thou wouldst quiet and still my soul, and work it to an happy calmness. Now I shall give Reasons why the godly are so much with God.

I. Because he hath appointed them to come unto him, and make their abode with him. It belongs to him to give laws touching the disposal of their lives, and manners, and amongst other precepts, he hath delivered to them, to that end, this is one, that we should be continually with him. He requires not only that we should live to him; but likewise that we should live with him. Jam. 4. 8. *Draw nigh to God and he will draw nigh to you.* If he command then that we should draw nigh unto him, maintain communion with him, it is the duty of every man so to do. God hath made man and set him in a Sphere higher than that of beasts, given him a reasonable soul, and faculties, that are rational, for this end that he might dwell with him.

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2. He is the best company that men can possibly be with. Man is *animale sociale* a creature addicted to society, and of all company Gods is the best. There is no company either in heaven or in earth comparable to his. Psal. 73. 25. *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee.* Look upon the earth how many godly and choice men are in it? How many excellent persons for converse and holy entertainment were in the Land of *Judah*? But if these men of parts, heavenly qualifications, would not satisfie him, might he not have mended himself in Heaven? No, whom have I in heaven but thee? Not the blessed triumphant Saints are company good enough without God: Not the glorious Angels that never had speck of pollution upon them will suffice without God. Thus the Psalmist still fixes upon God. Hosea 2. 7. *I will return to my first husband, for then was it better with me than now.* Israel had wandered from God, and betaken her self to Idols, at last, comparing things with things, she resolves to return, and go to her first Husband: Like the Prodigal, if we go and ramble up and down the world, in the end we shall have cause to say, we will return to God, having bought our experience of the insufficiency of all other comforts and company at a dear rate, the loss of Gods presence, or the withholding of his comforts. Joh. 6. 86. *To whom should we go, (saith Peter, in the name of all the Disciples) thou hast the words of eternal life?* To leave Christ for other company were a great madness;

to forsake the fountain in the time of great drought; and take to the broken cistern. Do we desire safety, he is the best company? Where can we possibly be safe if not with God? Psal. 37. 39. *The salvation of the righteous is of the Lord, he will help and deliver them because they trust in him.* So Isay 43. 11. *I even I am the Lord, and besides me there is no Saviour.* If a man therefore would study his own safety, he could find no society but in God. Do we desire honour? This must be had with God. If you be in company with a great man, walk, and talk familiarly with him, you account it a great honour; What then is it to talk with God, to walk with him; to be called and admitted to freedom as the friend of God. This honour have the Saints: 1 Sam. 2. 30. *Them that honour me, I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed.* Would we have comfort? The society of God yields sweet contentment and satisfaction. Thus, (saith God) to Moses, Exod. 33. 14. *My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.* Oh the ravishing quietness that is to be had in God! They (saith David) shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house, and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures. In Gods house there is very good entertainment, there is the fat and sweet to eat, and rivers of pleasure whereof to drink. Revel. 7. 17. *The Lamb which is in the midst of the Throne shall feed them, and shall lead them into living fountains of water.* See the abundance of comfort and refreshment: there is water, fountains of water, living foun-

tains of water, and these attended with satisfaction and delight, they shall eat and drink with merry hearts hearts, *all tears shall be wiped away from their eyes.* It was the saying of *Galeatius* a Marquess (when he was solicited to renounce Christ, and close with Antichrist) let them and their money perish, that do look upon, or esteem all the gold in the world more than one daies company with God. A King seeing *Plato*, and some other *Philosophers* together, oh (saith he) yonder is life and happiness, making account that they in their society and discourse, were more happy than he in all his princely enjoyments. Well then, upon our seeing men conversing with God, we may cry out, happy are the people that are in such a case, thrice happy are they whose God is the Lord.

3. There are many special advantages they reap, and therefore holy men have and hold communion with God. Of these I shall give you an account in divers particulars, which will evince, that it is a point of great prudence to be with God.

1. They hereby come to be better acquainted with God, his nature, properties, counsels, secrets. Those that are much together know much of one anothers minds, and good men being much with God, they come to know more of God than others. *Gen. 18. 17. And the Lord said, shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?* Is there that thing which I to intend do, wherein *Abraham* is concerned, and that may be for the instruction of his family? and shall I hide it from him? from *Abraham* that hath lived

ved with me. From *Abraham my Friend*. No, I have confidence in him that he will command his children, and household after him that they shall keep the way of the Lord to do justice, and judgment, *Psal. 25. 14. The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him.* To those that live, and more intimately converse with him, he tells his secrets: These know strange things before they come to pass, by beholding and viewing the face of God, by holding communion with him they have these things imparted and revealed to them which others are strangers to: They are not only his servants but his friends, *a servant knoweth not what his Lord doth*, but it is made known to these holy ones, that God hath loved them with an everlasting love, what his will is that they should do, and what unspeakable things are laid up for them.

2. They hereby come to have holy boldness in them. While a man is a stranger to a great person he is afraid; but when acquainted with him he becomes more emboldened: so when the pious soul is inured to the presence of God, makes frequent visits, and hath reception, the dreadfulnes of the divine Majesty is taken away and it made confident. *Eph. 3. 12. In whom we have boldness, and access with confidence by the faith of him.* Through the satisfaction of Jesus Christ, and through his intercession we come with boldness and confidence to the throne of Grace.

3. It actuates and excites their graces. Good men being together do heat and inflame one another, how was Dr. Taylor ravished with the company

company of that excellent man Mr. Bradford? And if poor sinful men have such power to stir up our graces, what then may be expected from the great and holy God, who is light and life it self, *Cant. 1. 12. While the King sitteth at his table, and my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof* as if the Church had said, while I held communion with him my graces broke out, I was not the same as before: as the Sun hath influence upon the flowers; so the spirit of righteousness has influence upon the graces of Gods people, *Luke 24. 32. They said one to another did not our hearts burn within us while he talked with us by the way, and opened to us the Scriptures*, such is the heat of the Son of righteousness, that can bring life to the deadiest, and warmth to the coldest heart. I am perswaded that many of your own experiences will bear witness to this truth, that there is power and life in his presence. How many a time when you have been with God in prayer, or at a Sermon, have you come away inflamed with better resolutions, and stronger affections? How great impressions of sorrow, joy, fear, hope, have been made upon your spirits, according to the word that hath been delivered, and the dispensation of Gods grace therein.

4. They hereby derive glory and lustre from him, *Exod. 34. 30. When Aaron and the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come nigh him; Moses had been with God in the Mount.* Men that are known to be much with God derive such Majesty that those who are guilty, and

and have their consciences in any degree awakened, are even afraid of them. Such are commonly revered, and beget an awe in those that hate them for their strictness. *Job. 18. 6.* As soon as Christ said to the men that came to apprehend him, *I am he, they went backward and fell to the ground.* Christ did not use any violence against them: but with amazement they all fall down before him. Thus *Felix* that proud Governour trembles while he has a pious, and holy divine man before him, reasoning of so high matters as righteousness and temperance, and judgment to come. One would have thought *Paul* macerated and worn away with watching, and labouring with fasts and imprisonments, should have trembled before *Felix*; but *Felix* trembles before a poor despicable man, and his prisoner. *Acts 24. 25.*

5. They hereby come to be in a better capacity of obtaining what they stand in need of, and desire from him. Those that are at Court, and about the King are in the way of gaining favour, and being preferred. Their petitions may more easily be presented, their addresses made, and desires obtained, than those that are at a distance from, and strangers to the King: so they that live with God may by their prayers more prevail with God, than those that are strangers. What can God deny that man that is still with him, and is his favourite, who is ever admiring and adoring his perfections? *Exod. 32. 10.* Now therefore let me alone saith God to *Moses*, such power have the servants of God. God bids *Moses* to forbear to sollicite him, and

and hold his hand when he is going to fetch the blow of his vengeance upon his *Israel*. *Psal.* 145. 18. 19. *The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth. He will fulfill the desires of them that fear him; he also will hear their cry and save them.* The cries of a child, especially if for bread, for help, do move the heart of a compassionate parent, and will not God then hear the cries of his children, since he is a God of bowels, and tender mercies?

6. This abiding with God here doth make way for their abiding with him for ever. The way to live with him for ever hereafter, is to live here with God. Here *Asaph* is a proof, *thou shalt guide me by thy counsell and afterward receive me to glory.* This is the way and preparation for glory. This being with thee here, is to make me fit for thee hereafter. Having given you the reasons why pious men live with God, now we come to the application.

Use 1. of Information to inform us (1) of the great condescension and goodness of God, that will receive and suffer such vile creatures, as we are, to come into his presence, and be familiar with him: oh what condescension and goodness is here! It is a great piece of condescension to suffer the best men on earth to be with him, nay to let the highest Angels stand before him and admire his glory: therefore for God to permit such sinful unworthy creatures as we are, to come and live, and be with him, is great condescension indeed. For a Prince to suffer one of his poor subjects, nay one that hath been an enemy to his crown and
dignity

dignity and very life, not only to come into his presence ; but likewise to be familiar with him, would be deservedly looked upon as an instance of great condescending goodness. How much more hath God done, that is the great King ; King of Kings, capable of greater injury and affront, as having greater glory, and more sensible of it than the greatest mortals can be, and yet hath sent his beloved Son to beseech rebels to be reconciled unto God , and to draw as many as are children of peace after him, that they may be where he is, that is with God. Great persons are loth to take those that are of inferiour rank into familiarity with them, saith *Job 30. 1.* speaking of those his enemies, that took advantage of his grievous affliction to deride him. *Now they that are younger than I, have me in derision, whose fathers I would have disdained to have set with the dogs of my flock,* So far below him in estate, esteem, parts, and qualifications. Now for the great high and mighty God, to whom the inhabitants of the earth are as Grasshoppers, to take poor and contemptible worms into familiarity with him, is an argument of wonderful condescension.

2. It informs us of the happiness of pious and holy men, that they may be admitted into the presence of, and unto familiar converse with God : Oh this is a singular priviledge, and worthy to be pursued with greatest praise and gratitude. What the Queen of *Sheba* says of *Solomons* servants, *1 Kings 10. 8.* *Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and that bear thy wisdom*

wisdom : may much rather be applyed to the servants of God : Happy indeed are they that may appear before God, behold his glory, as well as hear his wisdom, and tast how good he is. Psal. 89. 15. *Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound.* Not only the sound of the ordinances and of the Trumpet, but relish the spiritual refreshments that are exhibited in them. *They walk O Lord in the light of thy countenance ;* and in *Matth. 4. 17.* saith Peter, in a rapture and transport with the greatness of the glory of Christs transfiguration, *It is good for us to be here.* It is good for me to draw near to God.

3. It will inform us of the great difference that is between good men and others, the one lives above, the other below, one upon the Creature, the other on the Creator. Some are so far from being ever with God, that they desire it not : They say unto God, *Job 21. 14. Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.* Psalm 10. 4. *God is not in all their thoughts.* There is a vast difference between the dispositions of good and bad. Take a good man, and the frame of his heart is to be solicitous about God, and thoughtful about God in duty : Will this please, will this honour God ? As to sin, *How shall I do this evil and sin against God ?* As to Ordinances, he seeks God in them, and enquires whether he have met with God ? If God hath withdrawn himself he is troubled. It is not so with the wicked, they are not solicitous about any such thing, their care, thoughts, and endeavours, is how they may be well thought of, reputed ; how they

they may drive on their covetous, lustful, or malicious designs? How they may gratifie their senses. They sense and keep of any passes, that are made by Gods messengers to pierce them towards their conviction and amendment: They will not bear the thoughts of God and their duty.

Use 2. of Exhortation. If it be the property of pious and holy men to be with God, to abide with him, and herein to rise to this degree of being ever with him: Then as ever we would be pious, and holy men, reputed such, and found such, let us endeavour ever to be with God, spend our days with him: No company is like unto God's, you have heard in the Reasons. Let the Devil, the World, the Flesh, say what they will, no company like society with the Father and the Son. Let us seriously consider, whether it be not as well our interest as our duty, to live more unto and with God. It may be for a Lamentation unto us, that when some pious Christians have been spending all their time with God; yet we have been but little taken up with that good company: How little Lord have we been with thee, even when we have stood before thee as thy people that desired to know thy ways, and do thy will? How little of our hearts hast thou had, when with our mouths we have professed much love? How have the world, our lusts, run away with our souls, thoughts, and affections, and left thee the outside and carcases of Christians? Let us run through all difficulties that we may get to God: Idolaters would run through the very

very fire to get to their Idols; 2 Kings 16. 3. A strange piece of devotion; and this was partly to expresse their great zeal toward them, and partly to be purged from their sins, and so to be a fitter sacrifice for their Idols. Let our souls then make hard after the true and living God, though through difficulties and fiery trials, Psalm 63. 8. *My soul followeth hard after thee.* Hereunto take these directions:

1. Withdraw your affections from the world. Look upon it as below you to spend your precious time in converse therewith. Reason thus with your selves; What hath God given me a soul fit to converse with himself, and shall I pass my time in converse with this dunghill, this impure filthy world? God forbid; He hath designed me for nobler matters, and shall I not do what I can to pursue them? As even you love God, and would be with him to enjoy his love for ever, love not the world, withdraw your affection from it, 1 Joh. 2. 15. *Love not the World, neither the things that are in the World: If any man love the World, the love of the Father is not in him.*

2 Take pains with your souls to raise, and lift them up to God. They are naturally averse to be with God: as children are naturally averse to be with their aged parents, they would rather be in the streets with their play-fellows, and children of their age and humour; so natural men are averse to be with God, they would rather be in the World about trifles. By how much the more backward they are, the more pains we should take take with our hearts; say

thus to thy self. It is better for me to be at some pains and trouble now, than to be in eternal flames and misery for ever: *David labours to lift up his heart, Psal. 25. 1. Unto thee O Lord do I lift up my soul.* The heart is naturally addicted to sink down into sensuality, it should be raised up. *Isa. 64. 7. There is none that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee.* There must be a rowling, and stirring up of these sluggish and indisposed hearts of ours. How vainly and unreasonably do many wicked persons reason themselves into Hell and destruction? I am as good as God hath made me, and shall I be damned for that averfeness of spirit, which is natural to me, and I brought with me into the World? This is Christians divelish arguing, which Satan suggests and puts into mens mouths, that he may drive them on farther to ruine. You must be taken off your own bent and affections, or you will be ruined for ever. It had been better you had never been born, than that you should rest in the same state of wretchedness, wherein you are by nature. Take pains therefore with your hearts, though they shrink and draw back, yet follow them from room to room, from one idle excuse to another, till they be driven out of all harbour. Lay hold of them, keep them fast, say, soul I must, I will have thee up to God. Thou must dwell with God here, or else thou must never dwell with him hereafter.

3. Allow not your selves in any sinful and ungodly course, that sets God at a distance from you, and begets a fear and dread in the soul that
makes

makes it run from God as offended, till it recover the thoughts of Gods mercies, and then the soul returns and comes toward God with trembling. Now if the soul would be still with God, with how much boldness might it approach into the divine presence? If you do allow your selves in any unwarrantable course, you stop that intercourse you might have with God; therefore when you begin to feel your souls starting aside from God, recall them, charge them to keep close to God, leave them not, till you have brought them into some good frame, and resolve as *David*, Thy benefits are so innumerable, they are so large a theme for my thoughts, that *Psal.* 139. 18. *When I awake I am still with thee.* Yet he had a holy jealousy over him self, ver. 23. 24. *Search me O God, and know my heart, try me and know my thoughts.* And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. *David* was a man that did commune much with his own heart, and knew how things went with himself: Yet he is desirous that God would make a search; that what he had done amiss might be taken away and amended. Thus should we do, search how it goes with head, heart, life, conversation, and practice, if it go ill with them, our communion with God is like to be much interrupted.

4. Pray to God to call you home from your extravagancies, take you into a state of familiarity with him, and preserve you therein. Say, oh thou that by the beams of the Sun drawest up the dew of the morning, by the beams

of thy grace and love draw up our souls to thee. draw up these heavy hearts of ours: we have been heaving at them, but do what we can they are pressing downward. We find so many intanglements of the world, besides earthly propensions in us; that unless thou draw, our hearts will not be gotten up saith *David, Psal. 119. 10. With my whole heart have I sought thee; Ob let me not wander from thy commandments.* The hearts of the best of men are addicted to wandering from God, and such is our weakness that every thing interrupts us, and draws us from God: but we must lift up our hearts to God, that he would lift them up to himself, and never rest till he have united them to him in love and holiness.

Obj. Here is a question that many may put. You speak of abiding with God and dwelling with him. I have been about this many years, have had convictions, and look upon an holy life best agreeing to the soul, and the faculties thereof, and according to these convictions, I have been endeavouring what I can, using means this and that way: yet God is strange to me, what shall I do? What help in this case, that I may have nearer approaches to God?

Ans. 1. It is a good sign you have to do with God; in that you are sensible that he is strange unto you, and are affected with it. As for wicked men they desire not the knowledge of God they are without God in the world, and content so to be. But your sense of Gods displeasure, his withdrawings, the disconsolateness of being at a distance from him, argues that

that there is more than flesh and blood, a principle within thee.

2. If it be so as you say, betake your selves to searching of heart, and see whether there be not some reason that God should stand at a distance. Notwithstanding the riches and bowels of Gods unbounded mercy, yet he hath regard to his own honour and glory. He hath more attributes to look after and vindicate than one. Therefore it concerns you, if God carry it strangely, to consider whether God have not afforded you opportunities, invited you to converse with him, called, cryed, waited, to try whether you would come; and whether you have not refused and slighted, that he may complain. *You would none of me*, if it be thus no wonder God is a stranger to you. *Judg. 5. 15. For the divisions of Reuben there were great searchings of heart.* Sure then Sirs, there should be some searchings of heart upon this account, when your sins have separated your God from you. I commune with mine own heart, saith the Psalmist, *Psal. 77. 6. And my spirit made diligent search.* He was under this great affliction, God seemed to carry it somewhat strangely, his trouble hindred his sleep, and did so till his heart that he could not speak, he was under Gods desertion as to comfort. This puts him upon enquiring how come things to be thus with me? If a friend carry it strangely, it doth not satisfy us to wonder at it, and so let it pass, as we would do with another, but we enquire what word or action proceeding from us, what neglect or injury might cause it. If God look not

with the same countenance upon us as formerly, and his favour be not as heretofore, we must make enquiry and diligent search into our whole lives, to find what was the meaning of Gods dealing thus. How comes it to be thus?

3. You must distinguish betwixt his withholding his presence and his comforts. Though perhaps you have not much comfort, yet you have protection and support, which is matter both of satisfaction, and thanks, so in the words immediately following, the Text, *thou hast bolden me by the right hand.* The Psalmist, you may find, was exercised with disquietments, yet he had support from God, though disconsolate.

4. Though God withhold his presence, it is not because he is loth to afford it you, but that he may make you more tender of it, and value it at an higher rate. *Cant. 5. 6. I opened to my beloved, but my beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone;* this must beget a sad damp in the heart of the Church. *My soul failed when he spake,* she sought him but could not find him: Before instead of opening to her beloved she excuseth her slothfulness, now he is withdrawn he will make his offers more acceptable, and more readily imbraced.

5. Wait upon God for a more free, full, and comfortable exhibition of himself to you. He is a gracious God, adhere therefore unto him, and depend upon him. Though he may for a time carry himself somewhat strangely towards you; yet after a season he may be pleased to be more favourable, *Isa. 1. 19. I will wait up-*

on the Lord, that bideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him. This is a good, and truly generous, and brave resolution, notwithstanding all opposition and danger, to go on in faith, patience and obedience.

3. *Use Of examination.* Let us examine how things go with us as to this matter, where it is that we are, with whom we live, and with whom we abide, see what communion and fellowship we do maintain with God. I shall give some characters of those that abide with God.

1. A man that abides with God, hath his eyes ever upon the Lord, choose where he is, he hath still an eye unto God: whether he be at home or abroad, his eyes are towards heaven. The Lord is his refuge his chief possession, *Psal. 25. 15. Mine eyes are ever toward the Lord,* and this was partly in a way of reverence, as one afraid of offending him; and partly in a way of dependance, as one desiring instruction, support and help from him. Can you say this that your eyes are to the Lord, the eyes of your mind and your thoughts are towards God, are you upon every occurrence running to God? If it be so, you are with God.

2. He acts ever as in Gods presence. He carries himself as one that considers, that God hath his eye upon him wherever he is, what ever he doth, *Psal. 16. 8. I have set the Lord alwaies before me, he is at my right hand.* He set God before him, not only as the object and end of his actions, nor only to be a comfort and support to him, whereupon he might rejoyce, and his heart be glad; but as a witness and judge of his

his actions, which might engage him to sincerity. If we did really and fully consider that God seeth us, and takes notice of us, how would it influence upon us to be more serious, reverent and holy. The wicked and hypocrites have no fear of God before their eyes. God is not in their thoughts. They say in effect he seeth not, he knoweth not, or doth not consider: but this holy man sees God observing him, and therefore he is the same in private that he is in publick. The same in his own house that he is abroad, *Psal. 101. 2. I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.* Many when they are abroad carry themselves plausibly and fairly, but follow them into their own houses, what frothy talk, what cursing and swearing, what passion and bitterness: How disorderly are they there? How little of God in their mouths, and less in their lives? As when they go abroad they put on commonly other cloaths, so they do other deportment. But when returned to their own families, they fall into the same unhappy disorder and confusion; as if they had forgotten what manner of persons they were.

3. He that is ever with God affects solitude and retirement. He would not be alwaies in company, though never so good and proper. He would sometimes be alone, that he might more closely converse with God: Thus *Isaac* goes into the fields to meditate and pray, *Gen. 24. 63.* The word in the original may be understood of both, and no doubt this good man had supplication and prayer joyned with meditation. How oft do we read of our blessed Saviour that

that went apart to pray? *Mat. 14. 23. He went up into a Mountain apart to pray, so Mat. 26. 36.* He leaves his disciples with this command. *Sit ye here while I go and pray yonder.* To the same purpose *Luke 9. 28. He took Peter, and John, and James, and went up into a Mountain to pray.* The more pious any man is, the more he desires, at least some times to be alone. Those that cannot endure to be alone loose much of the sweetness and ravishment of communion with God.

4. He hastens through the creature to God. When he is engaged in his calling, he hastens through the concerns of the world, that he may enjoy himself with God. Though what appertains to his place he doth with diligence, yet this is not the principal object of his care, nor the end of his thoughts. When he hath gotten this dispatched how glad is he, that he may entertain himself with meditation and other holy exercises which are a most pleasant refection to him? This is the difference betwixt carnal and good men, they both hasten, but the sensual makes all possible hast, and hurry through his duty, he thinks of, and longs for the end before he begin: the good man is of another spirit, he hastens through all business, that he may have time and leisure to converse with God. In relations and friends, he finds comfort; but abundantly more with God. *Psal. 63. My soul followeth hard after thee.* As a man in a croud presses hard to get to his friend. So the Psalmist though he was in a croud and multitude

multitude of business and obstructions, yet he presses hard to get to God.

5. He is glad of an opportunity of being with God, whether it be to be with him publicly or privately. A carnal heart shrinks from duty, looks on it as a burden, when will this Sabbath be over! O that I might fall upon my worldly business! *David* was glad, when there was an opportunity of drawing nigh to God, *Psal.* 112. 1. *I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord.*

6. He that is ever with God, takes care to state things aright between God and him, to set all streight, and keep all well. In the evening he enquires, how go things betwixt God and me? what good have I done this day? wherein have I been useful? what evil have I done? and wherein have I offended? How go's the case between God and me. Soul, I must not lay mine eyes to sleep, till I have cleared all between God and thee! After he lays himself down and sleeps, and dwells in safety. *Psal.* 4.

4. Let me ask you one question, Christians, do not trifle but give Conscience leave to make the answer, what prayers and diligence have you used to interrogate and examine your state and settle your spiritual concerns? Have you used your utmost care and the best advice (as you would do in a worldly concernment, for fear of fraud or crime) to direct you and keep you from mistakes? Have you not contented your selves with easie work and slight evidences? I doubt, upon a faithful tryal and a true account you'll find much amiss.

7 The more any duty or ordinance hath of God in it, the more he is pleased with it; Sometimes God affords more of himself in an ordinance, sometimes less. He is at his own liberty and so will be, let himself be enjoyed as he sees good. But according as God doth let out himself he is more or less affected with them. It is God that he desires, and therefore his respect to ordinances is such, as carries a proportion in it, to what they have of God.

8 He that is ever with God, despiseth all in comparison of God. Heaven, Earth, and all are but baubles, trifles, and nothing in comparison of God, as in the 25th verse of this Psalm the language of an holy man is, *whom have I in Heaven but thee?*

9 When he hath been with God, he keeps in mind how God carried it toward him, what communion he had with God, and how things passed betwixt God and him. Did God awaken me by such a sermon? Did he enliven and quicken me in such a prayer? *David* remembred how God had appeared in the Sanctuary, *Psal. 63. 3* He longed to see Gods power and glory, as he had seen it in the Sanctuary. Those revivings and out-goings of God were written and imprinted in his heart, *Psal. 77. 3. I remembred God and was troubled.* To think how God had carryed to him at other times.

10 One that is continually with God, counts the intervals of his being with God long and tedious. A pious man saith, when will the Sabbath

Sabbath or Lords day come, that I may sing forth the praises of God. When shall I be with God, to hear from him, and pray to him as *David Psal. 42. 2. When shall I come and appear before God?* Now revise these particulars and see how they suit with your temper and frame, and if upon a serious scrutiny you find these not agree to your case, bless God that he hath wrought these in you: but if otherwise humble your selves, and mourn, and never cease till you can bring the matter to this, that you may say with the Psalmist. *Nevertheless I am continually with thee.*

SERMON IV.

Psalm 73. 23.

—*Thou hast holden me by my right hand.*

HAving dispatched the former part of the verse and from thence given you an account of the *Psalmists* communion with God, which was all I intended to speak of, when I took up these words, I shall proceed to this latter part, which contains communication of help, assistance and comfort to those that have fellowship with God, which is the reason and fruit of their adherence to him. The words in the Original are *Abazta bejad jemini*

jemini which *Molterus* renders *Tenuisti manum dextram meam* (*bejad*) in the Hebrew he will have to refer to Gods hand, and *jemini* according to our translation to refer to the Psalmists hand; but (*bejad*) doth not refer to Gods hand, for the assuming of (—) for (τ) in *Regimen* shews its relation to the subsequent substantive thus it is used *Jer.* 22. 24. *Psal.* 121. 5. And then the words run thus, Thou hast holden me by the hand, even my right hand, as if it had been according to the Hebrew *Pleonasmē bejad brinini* by the hand, even by my right hand. The hand of God may easily be understood in the signification of the verb *abazta*, which imports as much as thou hast laid hold of, with an Ellipsis of the Pronoun me. *Muis* doth peremptorily paraphrase on the words, thus *Lapsuro, mihi dextram porrexisti*, I being ready to fall, thou didst reach out to me thy right hand. And differs from our translation in the word *jemini* making it an adjective, and so agreeing with its substantive *bejad* and not put in Apposition; but so it should have been *jemani* without *Hizer* in the middle; or if within it *2 Chron.* 3. 17. yet read by *Camets*. There is no necessity of such a streyned construction, for as hath been shewn, this way of rendring the words is the most usual and unforced, and it makes the sense most easie, whereas how scant would the words be to express the sense, if there were no suffix? But they must be read thus. Thou hast holden by the right hand. Gods affording his special respects towards, and care of his people, is expressed by his being at their right

or holding them by the right hand, *Isa. 41. 13. I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand.* And though the metaphor of a person sinking or falling, were supposed most pertinent here, and it matters not then, whether a friend lay hold on me, sinking by the right hand or the left, so that he draw me out of danger, but it is not all one which of his hands he takes me by; yet the emphasis will be here as considerable and more; for God by his right hand of power doth lay hold of the right hand of faith of his people. So *my right hand* may signifie the Psalmists faith, and adds to mercy as well as the assistance God doth afford. The right hand is the hand of dexterity, wherewith we are more ready to lay hold on any help that is offered. And so the words would bear the paraphrase, I was ready to sink and thy waves to pass over me. My soul even fainted and sunk within me; yet I remembered the Lord, I stretched forth my hand in prayer, I cryed Lord save me I perish, and thou hast stretched forth thy hand, thou hast caught me, thou hast holden me by my right hand. But if the right hand of God be not peculiarly meant, they will stand well in their connexion with the present and subsequent words; for he had given immediately before an account of his communion with God, which frequently in scripture is set out in walking with God, and God is said to be at their right hand, *Psal. 16. 1. I have set the Lord alwaies before me*, which is spoken in other words in this verse, *I am continually with thee: He is at my right hand*, and that is answered by these words

Thou

Thou hast bolden me by my right hand. God holds his people by the right hand, and with his right hand he doth defend them against their deadly enemies, that lie in wait for, and are armed against them. Though the people of God are in the hand of God, and none can pluck them thence, yet the Devil and the World will do what they can to make them leave their hold of God, but here is their comfort that God puts himself between them and danger.

Doct. That God doth uphold his pious and holy servants in the time of their distress, when they are in distress he doth not turn his back upon them and disown them; but stands by, beholds and upholds them, *Psal. 31. 7. Thou hast known my soul in adversitie.* Afflictions and troubles upon me, change not thy countenance towards me: when worldly friends are as the waters that fail, look shy and strange upon me. Thou art my God, thou wilt strengthen, help, uphold me. *Thou wilt not be far from me,* when trouble is nigh God doth maintain the Lot of his people, *Psal. 16. 5.* That Dimension of grace and comfort, which he hath bestowed on them. He is their staff and stay, whereby their natural spiritual and eternal life is supported, not a staff of reed like *Egypt*, that if a little stress be laid on it will break. The Church findeth it her security, support, and comfort to lean on Christ, *Cant. 8. 5.* Being taken with all carnal confidences and dependance on creatures, layes the weight of temporal, spiritual, eternal life, and concernments on him. O what familiarity, what condescension

cention in God doth it argue to suffer to suffer his Church as his beloved, to lie in his bosome, his left hand being under her head, and his right hand embracing her! The Lord strengthens his people with strength in their souls as Paul was supported, 2 *Tim.* 4. 17. *The Lord stood by me and strengthned me.* In the prosecution of this point, I shall shew what God upholds his people from, and what God upholds his people by.

1. What God upholds his people from? 2. From sin. Their natures are corrupt as well as others, and they are averse from good, prone to evil as the sparks do fly upwards, and though in part enlightened, sanctified and recovered; yet they have still evil habits and dispositions in them; so that if God did not restrain them, they would fall into those miscarriages which would be highly injurious, both to them and Religion. *Rom.* 7. 14. 19. Oh what a link of impurity and sin did this Apostle find in himself! yet was one of the holiest and best men that ever the sun saw. And what a tottering condition was *Asaph* in? *Psal.* 73. 2. 3. For he could scarce keep his feet, he was almost gone, when he saw the prosperity of the wicked. *David* was withholden by the Lord from shedding blood, and pursuing his rageful and cruel design against *Nabals* house, 1 *Sam.* 25. 26. The Lord like a loving Father looks after and regards his servants, keeping them from the unhappy extravagancies their corrupt natures lead and prompt them to. Though God do permit them sometimes to fall foully by their iniquities, yet he keeps them from

from total and final Apostacy, from the belief of the truth, and the life which is according to godliness.

2 God upholds his people from desponding and fainting; sometimes their tryals and troubles are so great, that they know not what in the world to do with themselves, so that if he did not interpose, they would faint and throw up their Religion and hopes at once, *Psal. 73. 13. 21.* Now to prevent this, God comes in with his cordial waters, instructs, satisfies, and comforts them. When they were about to pull *Paul* in pieces, *Acts 23. 11.* Its said, the night following *the Lord stood by him, and said be of good cheer.* The Lord upholds his people under spiritual disertions, that they shall not be utterly and irrecoverably cast down, and sunk under the sence of his displeasure and the hiding of his face, he presents to them, and convinces them of their great weakness in their complaints, and shews them the days of the right hand of the most High, helps them that sit in darknes to reflect on former experience, when they had sunshine and his promise, that he will be a light unto them, a Sun and a shield, and will withhold from them no good thing, so *Psal. 77. 7. 8, 10. Psal. 42. 6. 8.* He assures them that he is not gone for evermore, that he is not quite gone. Though for a small moment he forsake them, yet with great mercy will he gather them, *Isa. 54. 7. 8.* *In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy upon thee.* Under their greatest dejections there is some
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spring or other of comfort that they lay hold on, and is stretched out unto them, that they may be kept from being overwhelmed, some twig or other of a promise or experience, that may bear them up. Though God seems to be departed from them quite, yet he doth but hide his face, whereby his favour is discovered in more clear features. He is nigh to them by his special grace, when they think him afar off, when they are crying the Lord hath forsaken me, my God hath forgotten, and are groping for him in the dark, he is at their right hand. The Lord upholds them from being discouraged, and fainting under outward afflictions, and therefore shews them how needful and useful they are, how much love, care, and fatherly tenderness and providence there is manifested in them, and the design of them; how light and short they are compared to the mass of glory that is set before them; what the end of the Lord is with his servants, who patiently expect the coming of Christ, lest they should be weary and faint in their minds. *Heb. 12. 3, 5.*

3. God upholds his people from ruine and destruction, both temporal and eternal, 1. From temporal ruine, and so he either upholds them against troubles of the world that they shall not touch them, or keeps them from the evils of World though they share in common calamities, and though they do not escape, yet they shall be enabled to bear afflictions, that the *tryall of their faith may be found, though it be tryed by fire, unto praise and honour, and glory at the appearing*

appearing of *Jesus Christ*. Sometimes God preserves them from the eminent judgments he brings upon the world of the *ungodly*. They are separated from the plagues brought on the wicked, when their preservation may make eminently for his glory, and when they have born remarkable witness against the sins that have brought judgments. *While Lot lingered*; Gen. 19. 16. *the men laid hold upon his hand — the Lord being merciful to him, and they brought him forth and set him without the City*, thus was he delivered from that flaming destruction, an emblem of hell, which turned *Sodom and Gomorrah* into ashes. That righteous man dwelling among them, *in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds, and filthy conversation*, 2 Pet. 2. 6. 7, 8. The Lord knoweth how and when to deliver the righteous and godly out of temptations, and out of judgments, and how to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished, God spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the *ungodly*, 2 Pet. 2. 5. That God might shew his power, and publish his name through all the earth, he raised up *Pharaoh*, and destroyed him, when he made a way in the sea, and a path in the mighty waters, for *Israel* that was precious in his sight, when they passed through the waters in the red Sea, the Lord was with them, and when they passed over the river of *Jordan*, it did not overflow, so the God in whom the three Worthies in *Babylon* trusted, Dan. 3. 16. 17.

was able to deliver them from the fiery furnace , that they were not burnt , neither did the flame kindle upon them. If they cannot promise themselves security from common calamity , as ordinarily they cannot, yet they pray, and it is promised that they shall be delivered from this present evil world. *The Lord is faithful , who shall establish and keep them from evil, 2 Thes. 3. 3.* And our Lord Jesus , who knew what was most necessary and proper for his Disciples, *Job. 17. 15. Prayeth not that God would take them out of the world , in which world chap. 16. 33.* He had told that they should have tribulation, *but that he would keep them from the evil. And Christ gave himself for our sins that he might deliver us from this present evil world.* Though they fall into the hands of violent and unreasonable men, that neither have faith nor humanity, yet they are in the hands of God , not forsaken of him, and therefore not utterly cast down. Though they fall, they shall not be utterly cast down, for the Lord upholdeth them with his hand. *Psal. 37. 24.* When trouble is on every side , and they seem to be hedg'd in with thorns, they are not distressed, so that there is no way can be found for them to escape, when they are in the snare of the fowler , God breaks the snare and they escape. They may be perplexed , but not in dispare, persecuted, but not forsaken, cast down but not destroyed, *2 Cor. 4. 8, 9. God will be with them in six troubles and in seven. Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth them out of them all , Psal. 34. 19.* Their fall shall not be irrecoverable

coverable and desperate, but they shall arise out of their afflictions, and their faith shall triumph over the reproaches and malice of the malignant world, *Matth. 7. 8. When I fall, I shall arise. A just man falleth seven times and riseth up again. Prov. 24. 16.* There shall be an end of their troubles, their redemption draws on. *Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tryed he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised, Jam. 1. 12.* It would be madness indeed to cast away their confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. They had need of patience, that after they have done the will of God, they may receive the promises. *But yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Heb. 10. 36, 37.* Their miseries shall have bounds, and an end. They shall not always be sighing under their burdens; sobbing out their complaints, there is a rest after all their travels, a land flowing with milk and honey, with rivers of pleasures for a dry and barren wilderness. *The wickedness of the wicked will come to an end, the Devil may rage, and roar, and raise persecution, and they suffer tribulation ten daies, Rev. 2. 10.* The Devils Agents have their hour, *Luke 22. 53. This is your hour and the power of darkness.* Nay all the calamities of the people of God are light, and but for a moment, if compared with eternity of glory.

2 They shall be upheld and kept from eternal destruction. *The ungodly shall not stand in judgment, nor sinners in the Congregation of the*

righteous, *Psal.* 1. 5. They shall be cast and fall in the trial, when the assembly of the first-born, shall stand and be acquitted, and received into those everlasting and blessed habitations, with a happy welcome, *Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you.* They shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, *2 Pet.* 1. 5.

2. Having shown what God upholds his people from, in the next place we shall shew by what God upholds them.

1. By his own immediate hand, without the interposition or ministry of his creatures, as Christ caught *Peter* sinking. This is called Gods creating of their happiness, that they may be glad, and rejoyce in that which he doth create, when he creates *Jerusalem* a rejoycing, brings about the prosperity of his people, when there is nothing of sufficiency or disposition in matter and means to produce such an effect. When by his *Fiat* he commands deliverance for *Jacob*. And although some creatures are made use of, they are such as are inconsiderable, and ineffectual without miraculous power, to cause any thing of this nature, and conduce the least naturally towards their deliverance, nay it may be contrary to their nature, and above their ordinary power, they are commanded to their service, and answer Gods command. The sea is taught to distinguish between the *Egyptians* and *Israelites*, and made a way for the ransomed to pass over. *Elijah* is fed by a Raven. When *Daniel* is thrown into the den, the hungry Lions forget their hunger and cruelty. The vermine plague

plague *Egypt*, and trouble not *Goshen*. At the found of the rams horns and the shout of *Israel* the walls of *Jericho* fall. God has secret and invincible ways of conveying relief to his people. They cannot be in so close a prison, so begirt with danger but he can come to them, comfort and deliver them, manifest that help and salvation is from the Lord. He sends in his comforts to them that can pass through guards and iron gates, unseen, unheard, and not to be resisted, which their enemies cannot hinder them of, and these they cannot take away from them, *Hos.* 2. 14. When he hath brought them into the wilderness, he speaks comfortably to them, he sends an encouraging message to *Paul*. Be of good cheer and in the multitudes of their thoughts within them, his comforts delight their souls, *Psal.* 94. 19.

2. God upholds his people by his word, whereby he affords them instruction, encouragement and comfort. When they are in distress, they betake them thither as to a Sacred Directory, and are preserved from evil, *Psal.* 17. 4. *By the words of thy lips I have kept me from the path of the destroyer. Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee.* *Psal.* 119. 11. They go to the word as a Sanctuary, and in the word the Psalmist took sanctuary against his fears. *Psal.* 73. 17. He was perplexed till he came into Gods Sanctuary: Some by Sanctuary do understand Heaven, till he thought of heaven he was not satisfied. Others by Sanctuary understand the place where Gods word was read and unfolded, and there are that

by Sanctuary will have the word of God to be meant. Though *Asaph* might not mean the word by Sanctuary, yet it was the word in the Sanctuary which afforded him comfort and resolution in that great perplexity. And this was *Dauids* comfort in his affliction, the word of God quickned him, *Psal.* 119. 50.

3. God upholds them by his creatures, his Angels, his ministers, and their brethren in tribulation and suffering. Our Lord himself was strengthened by an Angel, *Luke* 22. 43. and *Heb.* 1. 14. *Are they not ministering Spirits sent forth to minister for them, who shall be heirs of Salvation?* By his Ministers he doth mightily uphold and strengthen them. They are given for the perfecting of the Saints, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till they come to a perfect man, the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, *Eph.* 4. 12, 13. *We are helpers of your joy*, saith the Apostle to the *Corinthians*, *not exercising Lordship over your faith*, 2 *Cor.* 1. 24. What mighty confirmation were *Paul* and *Barnabas* to the Churches, *Acts* 14. 22. *They returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, confirming the souls of the Disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith.* The people of God are mutually helpful for the establishing of one another, *Job* did uphold many, *Job* 4. 4. And *Eliphaz* spoke true in saying *That he had strengthened the feeble knees, and weak hands, and had upholden him that was falling,* And God blesteth some with special comforts, that they may be a relief to others by their experiences, and may tell what God hath

hath done for their souls. 2 Cor. 1. 4. *Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them, which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we our selves are comforted of God.*

4. By his Providences which have been so signal and remarkable, that have raised them out of their fears, and revived their hope and confidence, when their eyes have even failed with looking: When mercies have come in, which they have been almost ready to despair of; And God hath turned the stream of affairs towards their relief and prosperity, and brought about that which was improbable, and they looked not for. Thus *Jacob* was revived, *Genesis* 45. 22.

We come to the reasons, Why God upholds his people? And they are drawn:

1. From the love of God. His love to them is so great, that they are called *the beloved of his soul*, *Jer.* 12. 7. He hath more love, care, tenderness than the fathers of our flesh. *If they being evil know how to give good gifts unto their children: how much more shall our heavenly Father give the holy spirit to them that ask him?* *Luk.* 11. 13. In correcting his people he sheweth more pitty and goodness; *For the Fathers of our flesh corrected us, and for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure, but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness,* *Heb.* 12. 10. Not the most tender hearted mother doth yearn with such bowels of compassion towards her only Son, as God doth toward his people. *Isa.* 49. 15. *Can a woman forget her suck-*

sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb; yea they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. This love to them is the reason why he will uphold them. Why did God lead *Israel* in the Wilderness, why did he so eminently preserve them? Because he loved them; therefore he chose them to be a peculiar people above all people, that were on the face of the earth, *Dent. 7. 6, 7, 8.* And the reason why he loved them, was because he loved them: not any goodness, or goodliness in them; but because he loved them, he set his love upon them. *He hath mercy on whom he will have mercy: He will have compassion on whom he will have compassion, Rom. 9. 15. Exod. 33. 19.* God his love to his people, is the ground and offspring of all mercies to his people, spiritual and temporal. *God so loved the world, that he gave his Son, Joh. 3. 16.* Christ so loved his sheep that he laid down his life for them. *Who loved me and gave himself for me, Gal. 2. 20.* God did extend and draw out his richest mercy for *Israel*: he did extend kindness to them in the chusing of them, in his covenant with them, his promises to them, his deliverances of them, because he loved them. *I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee, Jer. 31. 3.*

2. From their great necessity. They have none else to uphold them. *When the Lord saw the affliction of Israel, that it was bitter, and that there was none shut up or left, nor any helper, 2 Kings 14. 26.* Then he saved them by the hand of *Jeroboam the Son of Joash.* When he
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saw that there was no one to take up the righteous cause of his people, then he arms himself. *He saw that there was none to help, and wonder'd that there was none to uphold, therefore his own arm brought salvation to him, and his fury it upheld him, Isa. 63. 3. And he put on righteousness as a breast-plate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head, he put on the garments of vengeance for cloathing, and was clad with zeal as a cloak, When he saw that there was no intercessor.*

3. From his Promise. For the assurance and encouragement of his people he hath obliged himself by promise. *Isa. 41. 10, 13. Fear not, for I am with thee, be not dismayed for I am thy God, I will strengthen thee, yea I will help thee, yea I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.* In the 13th verse the Promise runs in the words of the Text, *I will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, fear not, I will help thee.* Sooner then *Israel* shall always groan under their burdens and Task-masters, and the oath to *Abraham* and his seed be violated, God will shew signs in *Egypt*, and wonders in the Land of *Ham*, *Psal. 105. 27.* Nay Heaven and earth shall pass away sooner than one tittle of the promise of God should fail. He that hath called his people according to his purpose, out of darkness into his marvellous light, will uphold them and preserve them blameless unto the coming of Christ Jesus. *Faithful is he that hath called you, who also will do it, 1 Thes. 5. 24.*

4. From their Prayers grounded and urged upon his Promise, being sensible of the great evil

evil and danger of sin, knowing their proneness to slip, they sollicit God with their prayers to secure them from falling. Psal. 51. 12. *Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free spirit. Uphold me according to thy word, that I may not be ashamed of my hope. Hold thou me up and I shall be safe,* Psal. 119. 116, 117. When they are thinking of their danger, sinking in the apprehension of it, if they cry unto him, he stretcheth out his hand and saves them.

5. From his own honour and glory, that is much concerned herein. This is that, which he proposeth to himself in all his performances: This he is tender of, zealous for, will not have given to another. This he would have us to propound to our selves in all our actions. There is nothing he doth, but he proposeth to himself therein the praise either of one Attribute or another. He hath created all things for himself, for the glory of his power, goodness, and other Attributes. *Whether things that be on the earth, or things in heaven, visible and invisible, whether they be Thrones or Dominions, Principalities or Powers, all things were created by him and for him,* Col. 1. 16. *For of him, and through him, and to him are all things, to whom be glory for ever,* Rom. 11. 36. He hath created Jacob his servant for his glory, *he hath formed, he hath made him,* Isa. 43. 7. God will look after his great name; and it doth concern Gods glory much, that his people should be upheld. What would the enemies say, if *Israel* should be cut of, and turn their backs before their blaspheming

ming adversaries. God is a wise builder, in Christ Jesus they are his workmanship: now he doth not begin what he is not able to finish. He is the Authour, upholder, and finisher of our Faith, he will bring his people to their full stature, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

Use of Informat. 1. Of the transcendent and inexpressible goodness of God. What manner of love is this, that we should be called the Sons of God, and be dealt with as his children, friends, familiars? Here is goodness incomparable to admit beggars, and worse, that is, sinners into fellowship with him. Here is firmness of love and goodness, that he will not forsake them: whom he loveth, he loveth to the end. *I will not leave thee nor forsake thee.* That he should admit not only into protection, those that had cast off their allegiance and rebelled against him, but communion. This is condescension indeed Substantial, and not Ceremonial as that of Princes many times is. Revel. 2. 1. *He holdeth the Stars in his right hand, and walketh in the midst of the seven Golden candlesticks.*

2. We may be informed of the difference between God and other friends. Other friends look upon us as their Sun Dials, when the Sun of prosperity shines upon us; but when it is a black and dark day, of Clouds and gloominess and thick darkness; of trouble and distress, then we signifie nothing to them. But God deals not so with his people: But when all are fled and gone, he sticks close to his people. Tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, sword,

sword, cannot separate God from his people. 2 Tim. 4. 16, 17. *At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me, notwithstanding the Lord stood with me and strentened me.— and I was delivered out of the mouth of the Lion.*

3. We may see why good men do not sink more under their distress. It is strange they are not born down by the violence, impetuoufness of troubles and afflictions, that abide them upon all occasions. At how noble a rate are they, through Christ strengthening them, enabled to carry it; rejoyce in hope, glory in tribulations, sing in prisons, take joyfully the spoyling of their goods, to thank God that they were thought worthy to suffer for his name, imbraced the flames. 2 Cor. 2. 14. *Thanks be unto God which always caused us to triumph in Christ. Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory over death, the grave and sin through our Lord Jesus Christ, 1 Cor. 15. 57.*

4. This shews the madness of those that run from God by an evil heart of unbelief to secure themselves, and bear themselves up with carnal confidences. Cain departs from the presence of the Lord to outrun his fears. Thus men expose themselves to sin and ruine; and yet flatter themselves with the imagination, that they are safe. If dangers be nigh by compliance with evil, sinful shifts for present outward security, we are not to run from, but to fly to him, lay fast hold of him, not let him go. Nay, we should cling closer to him, and hold harder, when evil approaches, as a child would of the parent from whom it, expected relief.

2. *Use of Exhortat.* In all our troubles let us have recourse to God. Are we in danger of sin, of despondency, of ruine? Let us get us to our Rock, refuge, fortress, and strong tower, to which the righteous fly and are safe. His Counsels will mightily avail us in our perplexities and multitudes of dissatisfied thoughts. Let us trust him with all our concernments: for he is a buckler to them that put their trust in him. He will stand between them and danger. Let us encourage our selves in God, be of good courage; be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. Put on resolution that nothing shall drive us from God, rejoyce in the Lord, and joy in the God of our salvation, though we meet with disasters and disappointments; Love and praise God for his help, and the health of his countenance; for this end God doth turn the mourning of his people into dancing: he puts off their sackcloth, and girds them with gladness, that they may sing praise to him, and not be silent, *Psal.* 30. 11, 12.

Use 3. of Consolation. What abundance of encouragement doth this doctrine afford, how may it strengthen weak hands, and confirm doubting hearts? Walk out and be delighted with this abundance of respect, honour, and advantage, that is done to you by Gods upholding you by the right hand. Here is encouragement against infidelity; fears, sorrows. Fear not, be not dismay'd, the Lord is your God, the holy one of *Israel* your Saviour. God is a refuge to you, a strength to you, a very present help in trouble, what need you fear though
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the earth be moved, God is with his people, they shall not be moved, God shall help them; and that right early. When the Devil accuseth them because of their sin, they have an advocate with the Father, *Jesus Christ the righteous.* 1 John 1. 2. *Who shall lay any thing; therefore (since Christ is the propitiation) to the charge of Gods elect? It is God that justifieth; that hath accepted of the satisfaction of Christ; and that ransom paid, as appears by the resurrection of him from the dead and his exaltation. Who can condemn, since Christ died, is risen again and maketh intercession for us?* Rom. 8. 33. &c. God having declared the remission of sins that are past, Rom. 3. 25. Satan hath nothing to alledge against the elect and called of God, that are found in him, *Not having their own righteousness, which is of the Law, but the righteousness of Christ, which is by faith:* So that the life they live is by the faith of the Son of God. What hath Satan to say? *For what the Law could not do, in that it is not able to answer its demands, and therefore, it was weak through the flesh,* that Christ by taking up our flesh hath done, so that the righteousness of the Law, which could not be fulfilled by, might be fulfilled in us, *who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit.* What comfort doth it speak to *Jerusalem,* when it is proclaimed that her iniquities are pardoned? How tenderly did God proceed with *Israel* in the way of his gracious providences with them? God alone led them, he kept them as the apple of his eye, *Deut. 32. 10. God taught Ephraim to go, taking him by the hand, Hos. 11. 3.* Takes that

that pains to bring up , nourish , instruct , defend his people as a careful nurse would her little one , and about the time of forty years , suffered he their manners in the wilderness, *Acts* 13. 18. which some read *ἐρεσσοφώρῃσεν* changing (π) into its aspirate (φ) and uting a word that signifies his nursing care of them , however God did bear with their childishness , ignorance , peevillness. Such love bears God to all his Saints , therefore lift up your heads , the Lord your redeemer is at hand. He will see that your faith fail not , that your patience hold out. The Lord will stand at your right hand , to assist you in every good work and office , and he will deliver from every evil work , and will preserve you blameless unto his heavenly Kingdom. You have the same encouragement to uphold your hearts , that the Saints and holy men of old had , that were strong in faith , and gained a good report for their faith. The word of God that upholds the Heaven and Earth , may uphold your hearts. It is impossible that God should not be , and then it is impossible that he should lye , and he hath promised and given the greatest security , that you might have strong consolation , who fly for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before you.

 SERMON V.

Psalm 73. 24.

*Thou shalt guide me with thy Counsel here,
and after receive me to glory.*

THe former Verse I have dispatched, and told you when I first pitched my thoughts upon the preceding words, I did intend to proceed no further: but the truths following are so sweet, that I intend a farther prosecution. The Psalmist in the preceding words having given an account of Gods gracious supporting of him in trouble, draws this comfortable inference, that he would yet favour him with farther kindneses. *Thou shalt guide me by thy Counsel.*— For in such sort doth God sometimes dispense his blessings to his servants, he doth not only afford them present relief, but future mercy: So it happened with this good man *Asaph*. In time of trouble God supports, in doubts, fears, and discontents he upholds; and God at this time did not only support him, but yield him evidences of farther and future kindness. This future kindness the Psalmist expresses in two Phrases: (1) *Thou shalt guide me by thy Counsel.* (2) *And afterward receive me to glory.* *Thou shalt guide me,*
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in the Original is, *בעצתך הנחני* which *Montanus* renders *in consilio tuo duces me*; and *Vatablus* in *consilium tuum*, that is, *into the knowledge of thy counsel*: But I shall adhere to our Translation, which renders it, *with thy counsel*. God had supported the Psalmist for the time past, and from thence he concludes he would guide him for the time to come: so that he might not offend him with quarrelling at his providence as he had done. The other Phrase is, *and after receive me into glory*. As if the Psalmist had said, I see, and read so much of thy love, that I know thou wilt do more for me; when by thy Counsel thou hast lead me through the difficulties of this life, thou wilt shew farther kindness, take me into an estate of glory, removing me to a state, wherein I shall be free from those evils I am perplexed with. From hence observe,

1. *Doct.* That God will, or doth guide his faithful people with his Counsel.

2. *Doct.* That when God hath guided his people by his Counsels, he will receive them into glory. To the first,

That God will and doth guide his faithful servants with his Counsel. He abounds with Counsel. Prov. 8. 14. *Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom*. Mark sound wisdom in opposition to that which is humane and vain, which oftentimes proves foolish and deceitful. As he abounds with this Counsel and sound wisdom, so he communicates thereof abundantly to his people. He sees to, looks after them, and according as there is occasion administers Counsel

to them. Sometime they are brought into such straits, that they are ready to cry out with *Elisha's* men upon the sight of the *Syrian Army*, 2 Kings 6. 15. *Alas how shall we do!* Then when they do not know what to do, he comes in, and advises them what to do, what course to take. Thus he did with *Asaph*. Till I went into the Sanctuary of God, saith he, I knew not what to make of things: but then I understood their latter end. I shall shew you (1) What a kind of guide God is. (2) What kind of Counsel God gives his people. (3) Then give the reasons. (4) Answer an Objection that is, if God guide his people with his Counsel, how comes it to pass that they fall into such disorders? (1) What kind of guide God is. And (1) Generally he is the best guide in all the world: None so able to guide us as he is, and and none so willing to do it as he. There is none we may so securely venture our souls with, as with him: Such a guide is he, that were our souls, affairs, concernments of a thousand times greater value, and importance than they are, we might with greatest security trust them with him. The soul of man is his darling principal one, his glory and excellency, and if it were a thousand times more excellent; yet here might it be safely deposited. There is not a guide either in Heaven, or in Earth, that is comparable to him. ver. 25. *Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none on earth in comparison of thee.* Oh how great and eminent is he in Counsel! Jer. 32. 19. *Great in Counsel and might, in words and in doing.* He is wonderful in

in it. Isa. 28. 29. *Wonderful in Counsel, and excellent in working.* This may make the wisest to stand and wonder, Rom. 11. 33. *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!* We read in the Scripture of some that were eminent for Counsel, *Ahitophel*, 2 Sam. 16. 23. was eminent for his Counsel. *The Counsel of Ahitophel in those dayes, was as if a man had enquired at the Oracle of God.* He was a politick man, and could guess at things extraordinarily, and the issue of them; insomuch that things commonly fell out according to his word. So 2 Sam. 20. 18. The inhabitants of *Abel* were so prudent and just, and had so great repute for wisdom and Counsel, that when differences arose among men in neighbouring parts, they would come thither for advice, upon the receipt whereof they commonly ended the matter. And we read of others that were notable for their Counsel: But what is all theirs to the Counsel of God? Alas, what are the greatest Counsellors in the world in comparison of him? Job 12. 17. *He leadeth Counsellors away spoyled, and maketh the Judges fools.* He infatuates, blasts their Counsels, and leads them away, as it were in triumph.

2. More particularly he is,

1. A wise and skilful Guide. He knows which is the best way to lead his servants in. He is acquainted with all ways, knows how to compare one with another, and distinguish betwixt the good and the bad: And he likewise foresees how things will work, and what shall fall out; for all things are and shall be accor-

ding to the Counsel of his own will. The wisest of his Creatures can at the best, but conjecture, and their wisdom is to confess their ignorance in what is contingent and unrevealed: but God knows what is most hid and reserved in the remotest causes, and that distinctly and infallibly. And this property is so peculiar to himself, that he doth both challenge and insult over the Gods of the *Gentiles* upon this very score, Isa. 41. 21, 23. *Produce your cause saith the Lord, bring forth your strong reasons saith the King of Jacob, shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are Gods.*— Here is a challenge God sends to the *Gentiles*, if you will have your dumb, blind, senseless Idols to be God, let them make it out, and tell what shall come to pass. This is the only and true Gods Prerogative. Now God having this peculiar insight into things, it must needs render him highly fit to guide and lead his servants, Psal. 78. 72. *He guided them by the skilfulness of his hands.* By the hand commanders shew much skill, and conduct, directing those that are under their command which way to go. *David* had a mighty skilful hand herein; yet what was his skill to Gods, so far he sees himself below him, that he seeks to God for guidance, Psal. 123. 2. *Our eyes wait upon the Lord our God.*

2. He is a gracious Guide. The conduct which he exercises towards his servants is ever attended with deligns of grace and love. The thing which in all the windings and turnings of his Providence he aims at, is that they may be
 holy

holy here, and blessed hereafter. He sometime^s leads them through wildernesses and desolate places: but this is not out of hatred, but love, it is in order to their welfare, *Psal. 25. 10. All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such as keep his Covenant, Rom. 8. 28. All things work together for good to them that love God.* When they are in the greatest straits and perplexities, and though all may say, these things make against them: yet all are for their benefit, who are the called according to his purpose.

3. He is a faithful guide, one that will not betray or ensnare them, his guidance is ever such as tends to their good. As he knows which is the best way, so he leads them therein, *Psal. 25. 10. His paths are truth.* He may deal severely with his servants; but he cannot, he will not deal falsely, *Isa. 54. 10. The mountains shall depart, the hills shall be removed: but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the Covenant of my peace be removed.* Sooner shall heaven and earth cease, than he will prove unfaithfull, his people have his Word, his Oath, his Being and Nature, in security for their faith and confident dependance on him. This promise is worth mountains of Gold. How great a matter is it to have a faithful, a skilful guide that we may put confidence in; one that will not fail his people, that is faithful in his promise and in his proceedings, *Prov. 13. 17. A faithful Embassadour is health.*

4. He is his peoples only guide, so far is he above all other guides, that there is none fit to bear that name with him, *Deut. 32. 12. The*

Lord alone did lead him, that is, the children of Israel. There was indeed the Ministry of Moses, but that was such a subservient inconsiderable thing, that Moses himself declines the mention of it, ascribing the conduct of Israel to God only. And hence it is, that his servants depend only on him, Psal. 65. 2. *Ob thou that bearest prayers and workest deliverance.* And ascribe their welfare only to him, Psal. 4. 8, *Thou Lord only makest me dwell in safety.*

5. He is a continual guide. He is ready upon all occasions to conduct and lead them. He do's it not for a day or two: but during their whole lives. Psal. 48. 14. *This God is our God for ever, he will be our guide even unto death.* Isa. 58. 11. *And the Lord shall guide thee continually* — He never ceases guiding them, till he have brought them through all danger, till he hath received them up to glory.

6. God is an effectual guide to his servants, and that in two respects.

1. He makes them close with his guidance, when he sees them goe astray, he constrains them to close with his counsel, and to be obsequious to his conduct. When he sees them wandering, he calls to them saying, Isa. 30. 21. *This is the way walk in it. When they are going astray, turning to the right hand or to the left. either in prosperity or adversity.* God takes them as it were by the hand, and makes them to go along with him. He delivers to them his advice, and causes them to close with it, Jer. 18. 2. *Go down to the potters house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words,*

words, Ezek. 32. *He caused me to eat the roll.* What a Magnetism was there in the words of Christ, when he spoke to *Simon and Andrew*? what an attractive and drawing power had they, Mark 1, 18. *For they straitway forsook their nets and followed him.* It was a strange thing, that the words of a stranger, and one that had no outward splendor; nor authority and power, no glory and lustre should so prevail upon men that were busied upon their employments, to throw all away, and immediately follow him. There went power from Christ to engage them secretly to yield to his commands.

2. He is an effectual guide, because he blesses his guidance to them, insomuch that they attain the end which they propose to themselves, in following him, Mat. 19. 28, 29. *You that have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve Tribes of Israel.* Those that follow him shall not do it for nought, they shall not be losers, though they leave father, mother, wife, children, lands, for his names sake; but shall receive an hundred fold, and inherit everlasting life.

2. What kind of counsel God guides his people with, and there is a fourfold counsel that he guides them with.

1. There is the counsel of his purpose. The Holy Ghost useth to call the purpose of God his counsel, Psal. 33. 11. *The counsel of the Lord standeth for ever, The thoughts of his heart to all generations.* This is the purpose and counsell that

that shall stand. *Prov. 19. 21.* When the devices in mens hearts, and their subtil and secret thoughts shall be cut off. God can bring about his purpose, that all things shall fall out according to the counsel of his will. Let mountains lie in the way, God can remove them; if rocks, God can divide them; if waters, he can dry them up; if fire, God can quench it. God doth guide his people by his counsel, inasmuch as he fulfils it upon them, and conforms their condition to it. As if a father take up such purposes concerning the government of his children, and then manage all things towards them in a way agreeable thereunto, he may be said to govern them by those purposes, so it is in this case, God doth rule and governe, guide and direct his people according to his purpose and counsel set down with himself, that nothing shall happen to them but what he hath designed, and for very good purposes to them. So *Rom. 9. 11.* *That the purpose of God according to election may stand. Jacob have I loved: Rom. 11. 7. The Election hath obtained mercy in Christ.* So strict herein is God, that in all his proceedings with his children, he still keeps close unto his purpose, not departing so much as an hairs breadth therefrom. So that we see, though his purposes be no rule to us, it is to him, the perfection of his nature requiring that what he purposes, he should perform.

2. There is the counsel of his word, that the Holy Ghost stiles his counsel, *Luke 7. 30.*
- *But the Pharisees and Lawyers, rejected the counsel of God against themselves.* This is the revelation

lation of his counsel, and eternal purpose, and contains *omne quod a nobis vult fieri, & multum quod ipse vult facere*. All that he would have us do, and that much he himself will do, but not all; for it is enough, and abundantly sufficient that God hath revealed what is our duty, and what we should do. This is that fixed and standing rule God hath delivered to us to walk by, Psal. 119. 105. *Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path*. It is the Lanthorn that God hath hanged out of heaven, to guide us thither. Hereby he directs us what to do in order to our comfort here, and happiness hereafter; this word we are to have recourse to, upon all occasions. We must have an eye to the Law and to the Testimony. *Asaph* went to the Temple, heard the word of God, then his questions were dispelled; his doubts and scruples resolved.

3. There is the counsel of his Spirit, whom he sends to them to acquaint them with the meaning of his word, and to help them to accommodate it, and apply it to their present case and condition. The word through our weakness, not being sufficient, he sends his Spirit in to our assistance, not to make any new revelations to us, or to acquaint us with any more than the word contains; but to enlighten our understandings, that we may see the meaning of it, and bow our wills to a compliance with it. *God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book, that shall add to these things*. Rev. 22. 18. Joh. 16. 13. *He shall guide you into all truth*. The Holy Ghost doth guide us into all those necessary truths contained in the word of God.

4. There

4. There is the Counsel of his Providences. God doth many times discover his will to his servants, in them thereby declaring what he likes and what he dislikes; what he would have them to do, and what to decline, Psalm 32. 8. *I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go, I will guide thee with mine eye.* The Master when he is in Company, sometimes directs his servant by his eye what to do; and so God. There is an eye in his Providence, he doth sometimes look upon his people, when backsliden, as Christ did upon Peter, when he had deny'd him, which makes them remember what they have done and weep bitterly. The eye of this Providence, saith a gracious soul, is upon me: I must do this and the other Duty. Sometimes Gods Providences carry in them so much light and evidence, and such plain intimations of his mind and will, that there is no room for contradiction or doubting, as Gen. 24. 50. The Providence mentioned by, and afforded to *Abrahams* servant was so pat and evident, that *Laban* and *Bethuel* answered, *The thing proceedeth from the Lord.* We cannot speak unto thee bad or good, that is, either one thing or other against it: It is as *Munster* and *Fagius* note, a Synecdoche, expressing both parts, but intending on'y one: Good they could not speak against it, evil they would not. The like Proverbial speech we have, Gen. 31. 24. God chargeth *Laban*, as he was pursuing *Jacob*, that he should not speak to *Jacob* neither good nor bad, by no means direct or indirect to do him violence, by flatteries or threats to detain him

Why

Why doth God doth thus guide his people by his Counsel?

Réason 1. Is taken from their necessity of it. And that proceeds partly from the difficulties attending our present condition, partly from our inability to manage them, and get through them. As for the difficulties attending us, they are many and great, Psal. 34. 19. *Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers them out of them all.* Acts 14. 22. *That we must through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God.* And then for the due management and getting through them, we are not of our selves able to do it. Were we furnished with natural light and wisdom, sufficient to direct us upon all occasions, and help us through all our troubles, the Counsel of God might be spared: But alas, still our abilities are so weak, natural or acquired, and we are surrounded with temptations to lead us, as *ignes fatui* do many, out of the way, and into danger, if not destruction: And have such deceitful hearts, that entertain the enemy many times, pollute and profane Gods Ordinances, we have need of Gods deliverance and guidance. The best of Gods servants are not without their sins, Deut. 32. 28. *We are void of Counsel, neither is there understanding in us.* How ignorant, blind, and dull were *Israel*, an holy people, in the matters of Religion? How were their neighbours ever and anon, drawing them to Idolatry; or rather they like wantons gadding abroad to learn the fashions of the heathenish abominations: When *Moses* their guide was in the Mount, how do they run mad upon

upon their Idolatry? How much more should we lye open to all wickedness, had we not God for our guide? God sees our frailty and weakness, and therefore complies with our necessities, and conveys his guidance to us.

2. From their prayers to him for his guidance and Counsel, being sensible both of their difficulties, they must encounter, and inabilities to overcome them, and get through them of themselves, they betake themselves to him, and crave his help, *Psal. 31. 3. Thou art my rock and my fortress, therefore for thy names sake lead me and guide me.* David was wiser than his teachers, had made great progress in Religion; yet with what argument and importunitie? With what sense and affection begs he the guidance of Gods spirit? *For thy name sake lead me.* as if he had said, such are my straits and infirmities, that except thou guide me by thy Counsel, I shall perish, I shall be lost and undone. What influence their earnest and believing prayers have on God, appears from *Gen. 32. 26.* saith the Angel to *Jacob, Let me go.* *Jacob* would not let him go, unless he blessed him. Thus as a Prince he hath power with God, and prevails for a blessing. So *Moses* wrestles with God, *Exod. 32. 10.* till God says, *Let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them.* God speaks as one that is held back from beating his child. Oh the mighty power that poor praying believing *Jacobs* and *Moseses* have with God, to hold as it were his hand striking! not that there is any impotency in God, but to give a greater lustre to his Ordinance.

* 3. From

3. From the mercy and goodness of his own nature, which puts him upon helping his people in their Distress. When the father sees his child fallen into distress he runs and helps: So God when his servants are perplexed and fallen into doubts, he resolves them by his Counsel; when they are dangerously wandering amongst pits and snares of temptation, he runs in to their preservation or rescue, and leads them in a safe way. He will not stand over them and see them perish, but when they are sinking he puts forth his hand as Christ to *Peter*, and saves them. Whence doth this proceed? From his mercy to them that will pull them out of danger, as the Angels did *Lot*, his wife and daughters, taking them by the hand. So *Isa.* 49. 10. Hunger or thirst, heat or Sun shall not hurt them. *For he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the Springs of water shall he guide them.* Which is mentioned not only as a description of his nature; but likewise as the reason wherefore he would do it. He hath mercy on them; therefore he will do it upon the account of that mercy, that is in his own bosom.

4. From his promise whereby he hath engaged himself, as they stand in need to administer advice to them, to furnish them with matter of hope and confidence, *Psal.* 32. 8. *Isa.* 58. 11. To the goodness of his nature he adds his promise. This he doth not to secure himself either from unmercifulness or inconstancy; but to quicken and encourage them to faith and prayer. Such is the veracity and faithfulness of God, that

that when he hath engaged his word of promise, he will be sure to perform. Though men break their words and covenants, are perfidious, yet let God be true. Let the difficultie as to the performance be what it will, his word shall not fail, nor his servants that trust in him be disappointed in their hopes. Notwithstanding all the appearing unlikeliness that Gods promise to *Abraham* should be fulfilled to *Israel* his Seed, that they should possess the Land of *Canaan*, when they were in *Egypt*, and sighing under their burdens and Taskmasters: yet he will make himself known by his name *Jehovah*. *Josh* 23. 14. *Joshua* amongst some of his last words tells the Elders and Judges of *Israel*, and appeals to their own knowledge, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things, which the Lord spake concerning them, *All things*, saith he, *are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed hereof.* This is farther attested, *1 Kings* 8. Blessed be the Lord, saith *Solomon*, that hath given rest unto his people *Israel*, according to all that he promised: there hath not failed one word of all his good promise, which he promised by the hand of *Moses* his servant. God will shake even heaven and earth, and overturn them rather than one promise of his shall fail.

5. He guides them, that he may at last take them up to his glory. All that care and pains God exercises towards them here, is that he may do them good in their latter end. *Dent.* 8. 16. All the Afflictions upon *Israel* were that he might humble them, and prove them, and do them good at their latter end. See the difference there

there is betwixt Gods proceeding with the wicked and the righteous. All the mercies and judgments of God on them do but ripen them for vengeance, and ruin them in the latter end. *Psal.* 92. 7. When the workers of iniquity do flourish, it is that they shall be destroyed for ever. He puts them in the fat pastures, and thereby they are fatted for slaughter. *Job* is a notable instance of Gods dealing and design with the righteous, *Job* 42. 12. The Lord blessed the latter end of *Job* more then his beginning: And the Apostle mentions that ye have heard of the patience of *Job*, and what was the end of the Lord. *Psal.* 37. 37. *Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace.* So in the Text, *Thou wilt guide me with thy counsel here, and after receive me to glory.* This is not only a part of his kindness, but it is in order to farther kindness. He leads them, (saith *Gejerus*) *per Aspera ad Astra*, even by Hell to Heaven.

Object. The next thing is to answer an Objection. Doth God guide his people with his Counsel here? How then comes it to pass they fall into such mistakes and miscarriages, and those of an hainous nature? As *David* guilty of gross miscarriages, that complicated sin in the matter of *Uriah*. *Peter* denying his Master with Oaths and execrations. Did they look like those that were guided by Gods Counsel, or Satans temptation, an enemy to mankind, and especially to the Church and people of God? To this it is answered;

Ans^w. 1. This was not because he did not afford them Counsel, but because they did not take his Counsel. There was Counsel enough in the book of nature, reason, Conscience, and the word of God, that if they had taken heed to it, they had not fallen so foully as they did.

2. When I said he is an effectual guide, I did not mean as to the preserving them from all sin, but for the working of them to a state and life of saving holiness here, and the lifting of them up to glory at the last. Christ prayed for *Peter*, that his faith should not fail, the root of it dye, though it was much weakned as to the act of confession, which is the fruit of faith; with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made, as a fruit and sign of the inward perswasion: the current of *Peters* faith was stopt, but the spring remained. God hath entered into a Covenant of grace with his people, by which he hath engaged himself to lead them through the valley of *Achor* unto the Land of rest, though they may have many wandrings, yet they shall not perish in the wilderness.

3. Whereas he doth not guide them so as to preserve them from all sin, but lets them fall into mistakes and miscarriages, it is that he may make them more humble, and exalt his own grace in the pardoning and saving of them. As to instance in *Paul*, that after he had fallen into such mistakes and miscarriages, God should receive him into favour. He was a great sinner; yet adhered to the letter of the Jewish Law,

Law, as touching the Law blameless, he was injurious, a Persecutor, he breathed out threatenings, he was mad against the Church, a zealot to do mischief: Christ lets him go on after he had consented to the death of *Stephen*, not only go so far, when he might have laid him at his feet before; but he lets him run on, that in him he might manifest the riches of his grace, and make him base and vile in his own eyes God who is rich raiseth to life those that were dead in sins. Now was that eminent vessel of mercy ravished with the sense of Gods great goodness, that had mercy on him, and made him a Minister of reconciliation, Ephes. 3. 8. *Whereof I was made a Minister according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me, by the effectual working of his power unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given.* Oh that I should preach the Gospel, how astonishing love and grace is this, that the glorious Gospel of the blessed God should be committed to my trust, that I should be enabled, and counted faithful, putting me into the Ministry, who was before a Blasphemer and a Persecutor, and injurious! He thinks he can never think, speak enough of this grace, never acknowledge and give praise enough to God. Amongst all the Apostles, none so great an admirer of free grace as *Paul*. How low thoughts hath he of himself, not worthy to be called an Apostle, because he persecuted the Church of God? Thus notwithstanding the enormous outrages of those that are Gods chosen, his grace shall fetch them in, and notwithstanding great failures, his called shall

have grace enough to bring them unto glory.

2. *Use of Informat.* 1. Of the goodness of God, as he expresses it in admitting them into Communion with him, and holding them by the right hand: So in receiving them up into glory, Ephes. 2. 6. *He hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places, in Christ Jesus.* By virtue of our union with Christ our head, that is ascended into glory, and the unchangeable decree of God that will perfect for us what he hath begun in us, we are glorified. *That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness towards us through Jesus Christ.* For a man that sees his neighbour in distress, to be so neighbourly as to go and give him such Counsel as may make him happy, argues great kindness. What is this to the goodness of God, that condescends to bow the Heavens and come down to visit and Counsel poor miserable, wandring and distressed sinners in the way wherein they should walk, leads them by the hand through all the difficulties of this life, into the Kingdom prepared for them before the foundation of the world. Psal. 73. 1 *Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart.*

2. This may inform us of the happiness of the servants of God, that have such a friend and Counsellor as none other people in the world. If a man have a friend that is a great Counsellor, and ready upon all occasions to advise him in his affairs, how great a priviledge is it, and how happy is he accounted? How happy then

then are the people of God, that have the great God for their guider and counsellour, from whom they may have direction and instructions what to do in all their straits? They may go to him when and upon what business they please, for their good, and find him at hand, a very present help without any money or fee. If it were happiness to *Solomons* servants to stand about him, and hear his wisdom, *1 Kings* 10. 8. What happiness then is it for the people of God, to be in the presence of God, to hear his counsel? What would the servants of God do, if they had not God to look after them? *Prov.* 11. 14. *Where no counsel is, the people fall.* Were it not for this counsel, when Satan and the world rage, when temptations and corruptions are many, and the soul full of fears and perplexity, it would go very ill with the people of God.

3. It informs us whence it comes to pass that the people of God break through such straits, and conquer such difficulties, it is the conduct of God, that leads them into the land of rest, that makes way for them through dangers and exposition. Thus the *Israelites* passed through the great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought. Whence had they ability to do it? Why, the Lord did lead them.

4. It informs us of the reason wherefore the Salvation of good men is so infallible and certain. A good man is as sure of heaven as if he were already possessed of it, and though it may be doubtful to his sense, and distrustful fears, yet his title is good, and there is a certainty of

the thing. The Kingdom is assured to him! He may have his temptations, sins, doubts, fears, yet is he sure of heaven, Psal. 37. 37. *Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace*, this man is remarkable, and it is remarkable how sweetly this man ends, what a blessed end hath he? Consider not only his great afflictions, how the hand of the Lord is upon him, as *Job*, but what all ends in, the end is peace and prosperity for ever. Though he usually doth meet with a wilderness betwixt him and his *Canaan*, yet his end shall be happiness.

5. If God guide his faithful servants with his counsell, then it is good in matters of Religion to advise with the people of God, consult those that lie in the bosome of Christ, to them he discovers his secrets, he makes known his counsel, John 13. 23, 24. *There was leaning on Jesus bosome one of his Disciples, whom Jesus loved, Simon Peter beckned to him, that he should ask of whom he spake, when he told them one of them should betray him.*

Use 2. By way of reproof to such as profess themselves Gods servants; and yet in their straits do not advise with him. Though he offers his counsel and is ready to afford it, yet they will not have recourse to him. Oh how many businesses are undertaken without any advising with God! They advise with others instead of him, Hos. 4. 12. *My people ask counsel at their stocks, and their staff declareth unto them.* By stocks we are to understand their Idols, or images made of wood, which they were

were so blockish as to consult. Like unto them are they that make them. Therefore the Prophet spake of their Idols, that they asked counsel of, under the name of stocks, by way of indignation and scorn. And then for their staff, we are to note that in former times *Magicians* had staves, or rods, whereby they divined. *Exod. 7. 12.* To this purpose is that in *Virgil*. — *Hac animas ille evocat Orco.* T'was sad that any should be so sottish, and such images of men, as to worship what they had made, and to ask counsel of wood, part whereof makes a fire and part an Idol; but that a people in Covenant with God, so graciously dealt with, so delivered, conducted, encreased, was sad indeed. And it's laid to the charge of *Asa*, 2 Chron. 16. 12. *That in his disease he sought not unto the Lord, but to the Physitians.* Though God allow; and require the use of means that are proper: yet he forbids confidence, and trusting in these, he would have us in the use of them to look beyond them, but stocks and stones were not proper means for counsel, yet his people went to these, and neglected him. How God resents this, we may see by the punishment he inflicts for it. *Psal. 107. 11, 12.* *Because they rebelled against the words of God, and contemned the counsel of the most High. Therefore he brought down their heart with labours they fell down, and there was none to help.* *Prov. 1. 24, 26.* *Ye have set at nought all my counsel and would none of my reproof, I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh,* so far will God be from helping those that

make small reckoning of his counsell, that he laughs at them.

Use 3. Exhort. 1. Let us bless God for his gracious condescension, and goodness that he favours us, so far as to guide and counsel us, Psal. 16. 7. *I will bless the Lord who hath given me counsel.* Though he were a King of great personal worth; yet he looked upon it as a piece of great condescension in God, to favour him with his counsel, and blesses him for it, what then should we do who are every way so far below him? How desirous of, and thankful for his counsel should we be? How should we acknowledge his condescension that looks through troops of Angels, multitudes of Saints upon us sinners? 2. When we are in straits let us make our applications, and have our recourse to him; advise with him. When we are exercised with any doubts, fears, or troubles, let us open our case to him, and desire his help. Psal. 85. 8. *I will bear what God the Lord will speak, for he will speak peace unto his people*, Psal. 73. 17. Gods providences and the wisdom and Justice of his counsell therein were too painful for him, till he went unto the sanctuary of God, then understood he their end. 3. Let us close with what counsell he is pleased to give us. We must take diligent care that we be not mistaken, that we take not that for the counsell of God which is not, when he hath imparted his mind unto us, we must be sure to close with it. Let it appear with what aspect it will, it is that which tends to our good. It is that which being followed will lead us up to glory. Now having

having dispatched the first part of this verse, *thou shalt guide me by thy counsel*, we proceed to the latter part, *and afterward receive me to glory*, wherein we draw this doctrinal position, according to the words of the Text.

Doct. That after God hath guided his faithful servants by his counsel, he will receive them to glory. He hath ever exercised the thoughts of wise and considerate men, what must become of them after the expiration of this life! This is the language of every serious man, oh what will become of me! Where must I be, and what must I do for ever? Nay the more regardless and desolate sort of men, when they come to die, are not altogether without such thoughts witness *Adrian* a great wit, but a bad man, being upon his deathbed, saith he, *O my soul, quæ nunc abibis in loca, into what place art thou, a going.* Now, as it is God only who can resolve this doubt, so he hath done it by degrees in the old Testament, more obscurely; in the new, more clearly and distinctly, 2 Tim. 1. 10. *Now it is made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel.* Though in the old Testament this be exhibited more darkly: yet hath he set down many passages therein, especially as to what shall become of the righteous, from which an observant person may receive much light, amongst which this is one, *thou wilt guide me by thy counsel here, and afterward receive me unto glory* He is the King of glory. Psal. 24. 10. *Who is the King of glory? The Lord of Hosts he*
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is the King of glory. He hath glory to dispose of. 1 Chron. 16. 27. Glory and honour in his presence. And he will in such a way, and at such a time, as he thinks fit, convey his servants to it, Psal. 49. 15. *But God will redeem my Soul from the power of the grave; for he will receive me,* whilst the wicked shall be thrown into the graves, and into hell, he will receive me into a state of glory and rest. So Isa. 58. 8. *Thy righteousness shall go before thee, and the glory of the Lord shall be thy re-reward* in the original it is כבוד וְהוֹרָא יִאסַּפֶּךָ which Pagnine renders *gloria dei colliget te.* A very remarkable passage, importing as much as the glory of the Lord is ready to gather us up into it, so prepared is it, and fitted for us. If we will but fear aright, obey aright, and live aright, we shall see the day wherein the glory of the Lord will stretch its arms round about us, and gather us up into it self, hence the words of Christ entering into his Fathers Joy and Rest, Psal. 15. *who shall abide in Gods Tabernacle, and dwell in his holy hill,* that is not meant of Zion or Moriah, those not being able to contain all such as there are mentioned, but who shall dwell in heaven? who shall be admitted into thy kingdom of glory, to behold thy face for ever? For the farther illustration and proof of this position we shall consider four things, 1. What is meant by glory, 2. What kind of glory this is, that God will receive his servants into, 3. In what manner God will manage his business, 4. When he will do it.

1. What is meant by glory? The word

is כבוד which in its primary notation imports gravity or weight. According to the more frequent use of it, it imports glory.. To both those notations the Apostle seems to have respect. 2 Cor. 4 17. When he opposes the weight of glory to the light affliction. This glory is ponderous, it weighs much with his people, more than all their sufferings. Thus Christ for the Joy set before him endures the cross. Now for the word glory. The meaning of it is so well known, that I can scarcely offer you a word for the describing of it, which is not as obscure as it self. It do's in this place import a splendid magnificent state, such as is attended with a confluence of all good things, even what ever is requisite to the rendring of a man happy. This the Holy Ghost proposes to us under several notions; as a Crown, Rev. 2. 10. *I will give thee a Crown of life; a throne* Rev. 3. 4. *To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my Throne; A kingdom*, Mat. 6. 33. *seek first the kingdome of God and the righteousness thereof; Rest*, Heb. 4. 9. *There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God; Joy*, Matth. 25. 21. *Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord; Pleasure*, Psal: 16. 11. *At thy right hand are pleasures for evermore; and here glory*. These and such like terms do's the Holy Ghost use to hint unto us the meaning of that state, which God (after he hath guided them with his counsel) will take his servants into it.

2. What kind of glory is this? and here I would give you a particular account of it. But alas, who am I that I should do it? that I should

should attempt it? This is a work fitter for some glorious Angel than for such a worm as I am. In these mystical and sublime matters we can go no farther, than God is pleased to help us with special revelation. And what he hath revealed concerning the present business he hath set down in his word. But the account we have therein concerning it, consists rather of some few general hints, than any particular distinct discoveries. Even the Sacred Penmen themselves, found themselves at a great loss in this matter, 1 John 3. 2. *It doth not yet appear what we shall be*; John the beloved John that lay in the bosome of Christ was the beloved Disciple; he that was in the mount with Christ did not fully understand what the Saints shall be. And when we have gone over the Bible, perused all that the holy men of God have left behind them concerning it, and set it together, it will be but like the Prophets pourtraying of *Jerusalem* upon a tile, Ezek. 4. 1. a rude draught of that glorious City, or *Jerusalem* that is above, which is a thousand times more glorious than ever the earthly *Jerusalem* was in its most ample and succesfull estate. Some of those general hints which the word contains of it, I shall give you in these following heads. 1. Its Ancient. 2. Recall. 3. Supernal. 4. Satisfying. 5. Transcendent. 6. Eternal glory.

1. Its Ancient; it is such as God himself hath been enjoying and delighting himself in from all eternity. Before there was any such thing as worldly glory, this glory was in being, Joh. 17. 5. *And now, Oh Father, glorifie thou me with*

with thine own self, with the glory, which I had with thee before the world was. Besides which, there is a created glory which God is said to have prepared for them from the foundation of the world, *Mat. 25. 34.*

2. It is real. As for the glory of the world its but a meer shew or fancy, *Psal. 39. 6. Surely every man walketh in a vain shew,* מַלְאָכָה *in a disguise.* The glory of the world is like a Play, wherein one is a King, another a Queen, a third a Peasant, according to the Plot and will of the contriver; whereas they are no such persons but carry a little present resemblance of them. Of this nature is worldly glory, its rather an appearance, or shew of glory, than glory it self, a piece of pageantry, a shew, not real. With what magnificence and state did *Agrippa* and *Bernice* enter into the Judgment Hall? And how doth the Evangelist express it, he saith they came *μετὰ πολλῆς φαντασίας*, *Acts 25. 23. With much Phancy.* All their Princely gallantry and bravery in the Judgment of the Evangelist amounted to no more than a meer conceit or Phancy. They were glorious no doubt in their own eyes, and admired by the people that love to gaze at Pomp: but this was but conceitedness, phantastical and vain shew. But now this glory that is to be revealed, but doth not yet appear in its refulgency so as it will, is real and solid, such as hath substance and weight in it, *2 Cor. 4. 17. A weight of glory*, the word is βάρος, in answer to the Hebrew word כבֹּד which, as I told you, in its primary notion, imports weight, or heaviness. As much difference

as there is between Massy Gold and Copper or Tin : so much between the glory of this world, and that glory which is laid up for them that love God, and wait for the coming of Christ.

3. It is supernal or above. Indeed God can create glory wherever he pleases: If he will have glory to be on Mount *Sinai*, or Mount *Tabor*, there glory shall be. Where this King of glory doth manifest himself more fully, there glory doth appear: but the place he hath pitched upon for the exhibiting of himself in glory, in a settled standing way, is above. No place on earth being fit for so high and noble use, he was pleased to make choice of one above. *Psal. 8. 1. How excellent is thy name in all the earth, who hast set thy glory above the Heavens? Psal. 103. 4. The Lord is high above all Nations, and his glory above the Heavens.* Those visible heavens, when *Stephen* looked up stedfastly into heaven, he saw the glory of God, and *Jesus* standing on the right hand of God, which if it were more than a created representation of it to his outward and inward senses, we must understand of a miraculous vision, wherein Christ arrayed with glory and Majesty, was beheld by him supernaturally enlightned. Into this glory above then our Lord Christ was received, *1 Tim. 3. 16.* So that if ever we will share in this glory, we must leave the earth, ascend into the Heavens, and pass beyond both Clouds and Stars.

4. Its a satisfying glory. To have a glory out of the reach of enemies is much: then to have it satisfying, to answer the desires of souls

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is a great matter. As for the glory of the world it do's a little dazzle the eye, and tickle the Phancy, but it do's not satisfie the soul. Who had ever greater glory than *Solomon*? he was glorious as *Job* was poor: To a Proverb Mat. 6. 29. *Solomon in all his glory.* He built houses, planted Vineyards, made Gardens, and Orchards, planted trees of all fruits, made pools of water, he had servants and maidens, possessions of great and small cattel, he gathered silver and gold, he got him men singers and women singers, he withheld not his heart from any joy: But was he satisfied, though he had what heart could wish? No, Eccles. 1. 8. *All things are full of labour, man cannot utter it.* The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing. But this glory I am speaking of, will afford satisfaction, Psal. 17. 15. *As for me I will behold thy face in righteousness, I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness.* When *Peter* upon Mount *Tabor* had but a little resemblance of it, he was so affected with it, that he cries out, Mat. 17. 4. *Lord it is good for us to be here.* Oh what would he have said if he had been in Heaven, and seen all the glory there! Seen the blessed Saints and Angels, those pure and perfect creatures, beholding the face God, Seen the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, attended most gloriously, and sitting at the right hand of the Father, heard the incomparable melody of the Hallelujahs sung. How would this have ravished him? Could I present you with a glimpse of this glory, you would long to be there, where you might have a perfect prospect,

prospect, and then you would say not one half nor the thousand part of the glory was told you.

5. It is transcendent Glory. It exceeds all other glory, nay all expressions and imagination. So great was the glory of God upon Mount *Sinai*, that the raies of it made the skin of *Moses* his face to shine, *Exod.* 34. 29. The spirit of grace and glory shone in *Stephens* face, when he made his confession of Christ: all saw his face as it had been the face of an Angel. And so great was the glory of Christ when he appeared to *Paul* in the way to *Damascus*, that it dazled his eyes, *Acts* 22. 11. He could not see for the glory of that light, *Nimis sensibile ledit sensum*, The brightness of the Object overcame his sight. And God doth sometime adorn his Church Militant with much glory, *Isa* 66. 11. *That ye may be delighted with the abundance of her glory.* But alas, what's all this in comparison of the glory of that place I am speaking of. *2 Cor.* 4. 17. *A far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.* The words in the Original are καὶ ὑπερβολὴν εἰς ὑπερβολὴν, which is a phrase so high and lofty, that Expositors scarce know how to express: But this is evident, that it imports such glory as is exceeding high and transcendent. Here every thing is glorious, *Isa.* 60. 13. *I will make the place of my feet glorious.* Here, to say nothing of Crowns, Thrones, Mansions, the very Street is pure Gold, *Revel.* 21. 21. *The twelve gates were twelve pearls, every several gate was of one pearl, and the street of the City was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.*

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All these illustrious resemblances are but a shadow of the brightness and glory of Heaven. To add no more, How high is the account of the Apostle? 1 Cor. 2. 9. *As it is written, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entred into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.* What could the Apostle have said more? The eye hath seen great glory and magnificence: the ear hath heard exquisite musick: The heart may imagine a great deal more, Rocks of pure Diamonds, mountains of Gold, a thousand Suns more glorious then it is; yet neither can the eye, ear, or heart, reach those glories that are prepared for them that wait for God.

6. This glory is eternal, and perpetual. As for the glory of the world, its of a transitory nature. What is the most glorious Potentate but grass? 1 Pet. 1. 24. *All flesh is grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass, the grass withereth, and the flower thereof fallett away.* Man like grass flourisheth in the morning, and is cut down before night. Who hath not learned to say, *Sic transit gloria Mundi*, Thus the glory of the World passeth away. What's become of all the Triumphs and Jubilees that have been in the World? How short was their continuance? How quickly were they over, and how soon forgotten? 1 Cor. 7. 31. *For the fashion of this world passeth away.* The world puts it self into this and that fashion: but whatever fashion it puts itself into, its still in a state of fluctuation. But now this glory is unchangeable, its not only lasting but everlasting, 2 Cor. 4. 17. Some refer the *καὶ ἑσχατοῦ*, to eternal, and then it is as if he should say, Oh this weight of glory is transcendently, transcendently eternal; that is, so eternal as never to have

an end, 1 Pet. 5. 10 *The God of all grace hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus.*

3. How will God receive his servants to his glory after he hath guided them with his Counsel?

Ans. The Scripture sometimes represents this as done immediately by God himself, *Gen. 5. 24.* God took *Enoch*. That being an extraordinary case, and perhaps he might proceed in an extraordinary manner, and take him up to glory by his own immediate hand. But the Scripture doth most frequently represent it to be done by the Ministry of Angels. They minister to the faithful whilst they are here, *Heb. 1. 14.* and they minister to them in their passage to glory. (1) Some of them like a Guard do conduct and lead them thither. *2 Kings 2. 11.* *A Chariot of fire, and horses of fire appeared, Elijah went up by a whirlwind into Heaven.* By this Chariot we are to understand Angels which appeared in the form of a Chariot, and horsemen. So *Luk. 16. 22.* *The beggar dyed, and was carried by the Angels into Abrahams bosom.* Oh the difference there is betwixt the esteem the world hath of Gods poor servants, and the esteem that God hath of them! The world looks on them as deserving no better company than the very dogs: But God looks on them as not only worthy of the company, but ministry of Angels. Whilst *Jebojakim* and such like, have the burial of an Ass, are thrown into the earth without lamentation or honour. God appoints his Angels to convey a poor despised *Lazarus* into Heaven. 2. Others as Porters, do admit and take them in, open the gate wide, that the poor servants of God may have an abundant entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven. *Rev. 21. 12.* Heavenly *Jerusalem*

*sa*lem hath twelve gates, and at the gates twelve Angels. They stand not here like the Cherubims of Paradise with a flaming sword to keep us out, but with stretched out arms to take and welcome us in. Oh the wonderful grace and love of God ! For a King not only to suffer his poor subjects to come into his Palace ; but to imploy his Nobles both in leading them to it, and letting them in : Oh what Princely favour is it ! What condescension and favour is it in God to make his Angels their guard unto eternal life, the place of happiness, and ready at heaven gates to receive those great guests, Gods little ones that are of small account in the world !

4. When is it that God receives the faithful to glory ?

Ans. He doth it partly at death, then he takes their souls up to glory. Herein the Papists, Socinians, and some Anabaptists do oppose us, all using the same Arguments and Answers ; but the Scripture is very clear, Luke 23. 43. *To day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.* The soul neither sleeps, nor calls at Purgatory, but strait to Heaven, 2 Cor. 5. 1. *We know if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens.* The Apostle groans to be cloathed with the heavenly house, and to be uncloathed of the earthly, so saith the spirit, Revel. 14. 13. *Blessed are the dead that dye in the Lord, from henceforth they rest from their labours.* But more compleatly and fully he do's it at the Resurrection, when both soul and body being reunited, he will take them both to glory, Job 19. 25, 26. *I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And though after my skin, worms destroy this body ; yet in my flesh*

shall I see God. Here is a plain account of the Resurrection of the dead, the coming of Christ, and beatifical vision of God. So Isa. 33. 17. *Thine eyes shall see the King in his beauty, they shall behold the Land that is very far off.* This may have relation to Believers being with Christ, to behold his glory. 1 Thes. 4. 14. *If we believe that Jesus dyed and rose again: even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.* In the next place we shall give the reasons of the Doctrine, Why will God take his people into his glory?

Reason 1. Is taken from his own good pleasure; He may do what he will with his own: Grace is his, and Glory is his, and he may dispose of it as he sees good. He giveth his grace to whom, and in what measure he pleaseth, so may he dispose of glory. Matt. 20. 15, *Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?* As to the persons he chooseth, calls, and saves, Who can say unto him, what dost thou? *The Potter hath power over his clay, to make one vessel to honour, another to dishonour?* Now we are told what the pleasure of God is, Luk. 12. 32. *Fear not little flock, it is your Fathers good pleasure to give you a Kingdom.* And what needs any farther reason to prove the lawfulness and equity of it. If he be for it, what hath any one to do to be against it, Rom. 21. 9. 21, 23. What if God be willing to make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he hath afore prepared unto glory, shall any one dare to question his proceedings? What will men make of God? Shall the Potter have more power over his clay, than God hath over his creature? That is the clay, and he the Potter? *Nay O man, who art thou that replyest against God?*

Reason 2.

Reas. 2. Is taken from his promise, whereby he hath engaged himself to do it. As he hath promised to guide them by his counsell, *and given his Angels charge concerning them*: so he hath engaged himself, and given his royal word for it, that however mean and despicable they are, and are exercised with divers afflictions, yet after they have suffered a while, he will take them up unto himself, Psal. 84.

11. *He will give grace and glory, and will withhold no good thing from them that walk uprightly,* Dan. 12. 3. *They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever, and ever.* Oh what a ravishing truth is this! Take this along with you. Go home and wonder, that such poor mortal sinful carcases as we, should shine as the firmament, the stars for ever, nay as the Sun, Mat.

13, 43. *Then shall the righteous shine, as the Sun in the Kingdom of the Father.* If you have ears, hearken to this; if you have hearts to be affected with the glorious grace of God to sinners through Christ. Let men and Angels, Heaven and Earth, stand astonished at it for ever and ever. As sure as this is the word of God, this honour shall be done his Saints. If you will not receive and be affected with this truth, get you another bible that may affect you more and reward you better. Let the worldlings, voluptuous, ambitious, go to their *Mammon*, their delicious fare, their preferments, and see what they will do for them. What can they promise? more than they will ever perform, they can do nothing but help to a treasure of wrath, and fearful recompence. Not one Iota, not one tittle of Gods word shall fail. Here are words and more than bare words of eternal life, which are delive-

red by truth it self, God that cannot deceive, God that cannot lye. This truth I will stick by, and yet that such a poor mouldring, ever dying and perishing creature as I, ready to turn to putrification and dust, should be carried above the heavens, have the conduct of Angels, and the welcome of those blessed creatures unto the land of happiness, how doth it amaze me with wonder at free grace! What a thing is this? Though it be great, yet he (having given his word) will be sure to effect it: as for other reasons, so this in particular, that he hath given it under his hand as well as engaged his word, called heaven and earth to witness. Before he hath issued out his promise, he doth such things for his own pleasure, but when he hath granted his promise a farther reason, accrues to strengthen our consolation and good hopes through grace.

Reas. 3. Is taken from the will of Christ, who upon the account of his interest in the Father, and his own merits intercedes with his father to do it. Our blessed Saviour has ever been concerned about mans welfare. None save Christ could bestead us, when we were thrown out of *Paradise*, then, saith Christ, I will undertake, be surety for them. *Lo I come to do thy will, O God*, I will pay the debt and ransom them though it cost me dear. This loss shall be for their advantage, they shall be conveyed to another and better estate than ever they were in upon earth. When Christ was upon earth he died for them, and now he is in heaven he pleads his death, and as for other purposes so for this in particular, that God would gather in his elect, that they may be where he is. O Lord and Father remember my sufferings, how the Messias was not cut off for himself, not for any sin of his own. He knew no sin, but

but was made sin for thy people, he bore their sins on his body on the tree. And our Lord ever livet h to make intercession for his people, *Heb. 7. 25.* What his intercession is you may, learn partly from his intercession on earth and his last desires, he left this to uphold the hearts of his people in his will and Testament, which by the death of the Testator is confirmed to us, *Joh. 17. 24. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me.* Oh sweet words! that where he was his people should be. His lips were as a thread of scarlet and his words comely. His lips drop sweet smelling myrrh, partly by his promise. *John 12. 26. If any man serve me, let him follow me, and where I am, there shall also my servants be,* what Christ hath promised he can make good, he did reveal his Fathers mind, and God hath a mighty regard to the will of his Son. As the Son never disobeyed the will of the Father: so the Father never denyed the request of his son, *Joh. 11. 41. 42. Father I thank thee that thou hast heard me, and I know that thou bearest me alwaies.* Could Christ prevaile while on earth for the railing of *Lazarus* to life? Now he is in heaven, his arguments and interest are strong and great enough to raise his people to glory.

Reas. 4. God will take his servants to glory, that Christ may enjoy the benefit of his own purchase. He hath made a double purchase. He hath purchased glory for them, and them for it. As for glory it is the purchased possession or inheritance. *1 Eph. 1. 14.* And he hath purchased his Church with his own blood, *we are redeemed, not with corruptible things, as silver and Gold, from our vain*

Conversation, that we may be made meet for his his glory, *but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish, or without spot.* Its highly reasonable Christ should have his bargain that he hath paid considerably for, and he shall have the fruit of this double purchase without fraud from the just God; whose ways are equal and who deceiveth not. Christ hath redeemed his people that were slaves to sin and Satan, hath wrought deliverance for the Captives, hath bought an inheritance in glory for them, and when he hath guided them by his Counsell here, without farther delay afterwards they shall be received up into glory.

Reas. 5. That the head and members may be together. That Christ is their head the Scripture shews, *Eph. 5. 23.* And that he is in heaven we are taught in Scripture. *1 Tim. 3. 16.* *God that was manifest in the flesh — was received up into glory.* And that the head and members should be together is undeniable, whether it be a body Naturall, Politick, or Mystical, and so our Saviour seems to hold forth. *Joh. 12. 26.* And for this reason he receives them up into glory; that head and members that have suffered together may rejoyce together *Rom. 8. 17.* *Being heirs of God joynt heirs with Christ: if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.*

Reas. 6. May be drawn from the preparation that hath been made in order to the taking of them up to glory. 1. God hath prepared glory for them. *Mat. 25. 34.* *Inherit the Kingdom prepared for you.* *John 14. 2.* *I go to prepare a place for you.* Those invincible, inexplicable things of glory, God hath prepared for them that love him. This is the Ci-
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ty that God hath prepared for them that are not minded to take up with the Kingdom of this world or the glory thereof. *Heb. 11. 6.* And this preparation was made, partly by the erecting of this glory at the Creation; partly by sending his Son to purchase it for them. 2. He hath prepared them for it. They are the vessels of mercy which he hath afore prepared unto glory. *Rom. 9. 23.* *He makes them meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the Saints in light. Col. 1. 12.* What work doth God make, preparing happiness for them by his goodness, his grace and mercy, and preparing them by sanctification of the spirit, belief of the truth, that they may partake with those that are sanctified, of the glory ordained and made ready for them.

Reas. 7. From their prayers, they pray that they may be received up into glory. And when they have finished their course here, they have done the work appointed them to do, how do they long to appear before God in glory! There is no one who retains any thing of the nature of a man: but he would when he dies, enter into glory, *Numb. 23. 10.* Balaam saith, *let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.* The greatest despisers of godliness, the persecutors of the servants of God, that were thorns in the eyes of them by their holy Conversation, and stinging convictions of their own wickedness, would desire to be like these that they bitterly hated and injured. What then may be expected from those, that are of better principles and affections, we may well account, that as they pray that God would guide them by his Counsel here, so receive them into glory. How doth *Moses* desire to see Gods glory, the back parts of which he

he was only capable of beholding flesh, for he could not see his face and live. *Exod. 33. 18.* I beseech thee (saith he to God) shew me thy glory. By the goodness they partake of now, they are inflamed with earnest desire to see the face of God in glory, and how glorious will the mercy and grace of God appear in heaven?

Last Reas. He takes them up into glory, that he may recompence them for the service they have done. They have done him service, though all according to strictness of demand renders them no more than unprofitable servants, that have but done and not fully what they ought to have done. Yet God is not unmindful of the good wills and the labours of his servants, *Heb. 6. 10.* *God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed towards his name* — And he so remembers it as to requite it, as in other ways, so principally in receiving them up into glory, *Mat. 25. 34.* *Inherit the Kingdom prepared for you, for I was an hungred and ye gave me meat, I was a thirsty and ye gave me drink.* — Hence it is called a reward, *Heb. 11. 26.* *He had respect to the recompence of reward.* Not that our service doth bear any proportion to it, but that God hath promised glory thereunto. Be thou faithful unto death, and thou shalt have a Crown of life.

Use 1. of Information Of the wonderfull goodness of God. What that he should be at the pains and care of guiding us here, leading us by the hand, teaching us to walk in his ways, leading us in the ways of uprightness! and after he hath done this take us up to glory, oh what goodness is this! Alas, who or what are we, that we should have to do with glory? *We have all sinned and come short of*
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the glory of God. Rom. 3. 23. That is of deserving it by any works or performances of our own. We are not worthy of the least crumb of bread. We have more reason to think of prisons, gibbets, flames, and damnation than glory, when we consider our deservings from God. This is perfectly an act of grace and faithfulness, grace in making the promise, faithfulness in performing it.

2. This informs us of the profitableness of Religion. We may neglect, blaspheme and persecute it, but there is no way comparable to it. Men may wonder and scorn at it, and think strange, that serious professors run not with them into the same excess, bear patiently reproaches, greatly esteem the reproach of Christ, take joyfully the spoiling of their goods, glory in tribulations, not accept of deliverance: but the servants of God see reason for it, and great advantage in Religion though with persecution, They have as much as heart can wish. *Whom have I in heaven but thee; there is none on earth that I desire beside thee.* In the words immediately following. *1 Tim. 4. 8. Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.* Would you have honour, pleasure, length of days? *Prov. 3. 16, 17. Length of daies is in her right hand, and in her left hand are riches and honour. Her ways are ways of pleasantness.* If these are not given in a carnal and sensual way, they are in a nobler and better.

3. This informs us of the happiness of the servants of God. If we see a man that hath great things towards him, we count him an happy man. *Mal. 3. 15.* We count the proud blessed, not because they are proud, but because (as it is said) they have something to be proud of. Happy then
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is the man that is in this case, that hath God for his Lord, that hath right to glory, hath an expectancy of a Kingdom of glory, which he shall not miss of, or be in possibility to be dispossessed of. A Kingdom that shall not be shaken. There is abundance of difference betwixt the condition of worldly men and the servants of God. As for the former, their happiness is only for term of life; but for the other their misery is only so.

Use 2. By way of exhortation, 1. More generally. To all you who would do well hereafter, labour to be holy and the servants of God here. Follow not your own understandings, in all your ways acknowledge him, by leaning upon him for direction and he shall direct your paths. Follow not the perverse and licentious dictates of your corrupt wills; but endeavour to know what the will of the Lord is, that you may do it. There is no man who hath the use of reason: but he concerns himself in the young mans question, Mat. 19. 16. *Good Master what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?* That you may have eternal life, see that you be the servants of God in all manner of conversation; let it be your care to study, know, love, honour, obey, and serve him. Though Carnal men throw dirt in your faces and disquiet you, yet go on in the discharge of your duty and prefer your own safety before their good will. Alas! what is the affection, what is the good will of men worth, what can it do for us when we come to die, if thereby we have procured Gods displeasure? God, and God only can bestead us then, then we are left to approve our hearts unto God, to God who will be our judge. 2. More particularly, let us be under what discouragement soever from the world may be,
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this may lift up our hearts that our Redemption draws nigh, we may rejoyce, and be exceeding glad when our friends are weeping about us that great is our reward in heaven. Rom. 5. 2. *Having peace with God we rejoyce in hope of the glory of God.*

2. With cheerfulness perform those services God is pleased to call you to. God sometimes calls his servants to undertake great and difficult services, and if he deal so with us, let us not think strange concerning the fiery tryal, and be discouraged by temporary sufferings, which are but for a moment, to let down our hope, expectation, and prosecution of eternal glory, which will abundantly recompense for all the sorrows of the servants of God. Thus *Moses* was animated under banishment, when he was in as fair a way to have had an abiding place, and Country as any, having respect to the recompence of reward, *Heb. 11. 24, 25, 26.* And hereupon he refused to be called the Son of *Pharaohs* daughter, whereby if he had been minded, he might have entitled himself to advancement.

3. With patience undergo the sufferings he may exercise you with. Who would not with patience endure a bad day, so that he might be a Prince at night? Let us look unto *Jesus* and observe, what bore him up under cruel mockings, under bloody affronts and injuries, *Heb. 12. 2.* *For the joy that was set before him he endured the Cross, despised the shame.* He was a famous instance of suffering. What contradiction of sinners did he endure against him? and glory set before him, did keep his hand above discouragement. Many a bitter cup did he drink, many a stormy day did he endure, before he came to his pleasant harbour. He was exercised

exercised with tossings, treasons, torments, he sets the joy before him? And so should we, though we meet with many a stormy day, yet let us consider that a night of repose will come; and the joy of glory will preserve us from being weary, or fainting in our minds, and as the woman that hath brought forth a manchild, it will make us forget all our sorrows. What is there glory ordained and prepared for the generation of the Just? This may make them lift up their heads and hearts in trouble.

Use 3. Of Consolation to you, who are the servants of God. *Behold I bring you glad tidings of great joy!* Here is that which may make the lame leap, and go skipping and praising God. What an affectionate passage was that, *Exod. 16. 17. In the morning ye shall see the glory of the Lord,* when they had deserved by their murmurings, his terrible and avenging appearance. But what was that to this glory more refulgent, magnificent, and ravishing? You are exercised here with manifold evils, temptations, sins, miseries, but there is a day approaching that will abundantly recompense your labour of love. Comfort one another with these words, *1 Thes. 4. 16, 18. That the Lord shall descend from heaven with a shout, and with the voice of the Archangel, Then we shall meet with the Lord in the air, and so shall we be ever with the Lord.* That is, after he hath guided us by his Counsel, we shall be received by his glory, but at the grand Assize, Christ his appearance shall be more solemn, and the Saints shall receive the utmost perfection of their glory in soul and body with Christ for ever.

SERMON VI.

Psalm 73. 25.

Whom have I in Heaven but thee, and there is none upon Earth that I desire besides thee.

IT is the proper work of all the Creatures to imploy themselves in celebrating the perfections of the great Creator. That is the end both of their existence and preservation. This good men know, and therefore imploy themselves therein. Hereof we have an instance in the Psalmist in this place, who having in the precedeing Verses discoursed of Gods great goodness to him, is so affected and moved therewith, that he betakes himself to an holy glorying, and boasting in him, as if he should say, Oh what a God have I! Oh what love hath he expressed to my poor soul! How many ways doth his favour break forth upon me? As for time past, he hath taken me into communion with him, and holden me by the right hand; and for the time to come, he will guide me with his Counsel, and afterward receive me up into glory. Oh! What a God is this? Who is there either in heaven or earth may be compared to him? Amongst that glorious Constellation of Saints and Angels that are above, there is none like him. Oh how am I ravished while I behold him! I cannot think of him, I cannot speak of him without admiration
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and wonder : Such raies and beams of divine glory proceed from his blessed face, that make my poor heart even to dance and leap within me. I did indeed in my distress, entertain many pœvish and hard thoughts of him ; but I was a beast for it. I see there is that excellency in him, that neither Heaven nor earth can equal.

The words are an assertion of the supream and transcendent excellency that is in God. This the Psalmist expresses in two passages: 1. *Whom have I in Heaven but thee ?* (2.) *And there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee.* In the Original *אין עמך* with thee, that is equal with thee, as Gejerus notes. There are things in Heaven that I value, and things on earth that are excellent, even the excellent of the earth : but none either in Heaven or Earth, that I make such reckoning of as I do of thee. From these two parts of this Verse take this,

Doct. That there is none either in Heaven or Earth, either amongst Angels or men like unto God, or to be desired in equality with him. Indeed the Angels are very goodly creatures, and holy men have much worth in them : but God is far above them both. There are glorious things in Heaven, and curious things on earth, but none comparable unto God. When all is done, he is the glory as well as the Author of the whole Creation. As for the proof of the point, he himself affirms it, Isa. 46. 9. *I am God, and there is none else, I am God, and there is none like me.* So Jer. 49. 19. *Who is like me, not only as to my glorious perfections in my nature : But as to the manifestation of my power, wisdom, goodness.* Whom can the Creature propound to it self as an object equal in goodness, might, and knowledge, with my self? And the
servants

servants of God teach this, that there is none like God : They have found by experience that there is none to be compared to him, Deut. 33. 26. *There is none like unto the God of Jesurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the skye.* Psal. 89. 6. *Who in the Heavens can be compared unto the Lord ? Who amongst the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the Lord.* 1 King. 8. 23. *There is no God like thee in heaven above, or on earth beneath.* This is the constant language of the Scripture, None like God, none to be compared with God, none equal to him, which saying I could wish were ever sounding in our ears, that so we might yeild him that respect which the incomparable perfection of his nature, and unspeakable communication of his goodness calls for.

1. Then we are to consider in what respect there is none like to, or to be compared with God.

1. There is none like him in his Nature, or Attributes, which are such, as none else are endued with.

1. In his knowledge and wisdom none like him. Some men know very much, and Angels know incomparably more : but God knows infinitely more than either. He knows whatever is to be known, what is possible to be comprehended by knowledge. There is not any thing in Heaven or Earth, Sea, or Land, but he is acquainted with it. He knows all persons and all their concernments. He knows all things past, present, and to come, and that distinctly and infallibly. Jer. 32. 19. *Thine eyes are upon all the wayes of the sons of men, to give every one according to his ways.* And that which adds much to the perfection of his knowledge, is this, that
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those things which lye in the deepest obscurity, and are most remote from humane observation, are as obvious to him as any other things whatsoever, *Jer. 23. 23, 24. I am a God at hand, and not afar off. Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him saith the Lord?* And that which doth yet further commend his knowledge to us, is this, that he knows how to improve it, and make it serve his own interest. Some men have a great deal of knowledge, but know not how to use it: but God by his infinite wisdom orders things so, that whatever falls out in the world (let the Providence seem dark and harsh) yet he makes it serviceable to his glory, and he governs the actions of his enemies, which they mean for their particular malicious ends, unto his own service and praise.

2. There is none like God in his might and power. Some men have much power, but the Angels excel in strength, they are able to do mighty things; but God doth quite transcend them. *Who is like unto thee O Lord, amongst the gods who is like thee?* Amongst the gods is in the Original **אין** which Tremelius and Junius render *inter fortissimos*, amongst the most mighty ones. So *Psal. 89. 8. O Lord God of Hosts, who is a strong Lord like unto thee? Who is able to stand before him? What are Armies, Kingdoms, Empires, when he engages against them? What creature in all the world is there so great and potent, which he is not able to frown into fear and trembling, anguish and horror? What difficultie is there which he is not able to break through and conquer? Is there any thing too hard for the Lord, Gen. 18. 14. I am the Lord, the God of all flesh, is there any thing too hard for me?* Nothing can be too hard for him, for nothing is hard to him: There
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are only two sorts of things which cannot be done by God; the first, those which imply a contradiction, and those cannot be done, as a thing cannot be, and not be at the same time, &c. The second are those which imply impotency: As we say God cannot sin, so Tit. 1. 2. *In hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lye promised.* Now that he cannot do the first, ariseth from the impossibility of the thing in it self. And that he cannot do the second, arises from the perfection of his nature, that is such, that it can do nothing, but what is holy and good. But then for whatsoever things are possible to be done, and fit to be done, he can do them.

3. There is none like God in his Sovereignty and Dominion. There are some Princes have great Sovereignty, as *Abasuerus*, who is supposed to be that *Xerxes*, whereof we have mention in profane History, *Esth.* 1. 1. But what's this in comparison of the Sovereignty which God hath? The mountains fly before him, the Heavens melt, the Seas and Rivers are made a Chrystal wall for the ransomed to pass over, the Sun stands still, the Stars fight, the winds are still when he gives command; and inflated Monarchs commanding the creatures from their natural course, have discovered more their prodigious folly than power. In all this great earth there is not a spot of ground but it is his. Though he lets it out to the sons of men, yet he still remains the chief Proprietary and Lord, he is the chief Lord, and so will be to the worlds end. He is the King of all the earth, *Psal.* 47. 27. *He is a great King over all the earth.* Men count it a great matter if they can but once possess themselves of a little part of the earth: But he is Lord of all. *The earth is the Lords, and the fulness thereof. If I were hungry*

hungry I would not tell thee, for the world is mine, Psal. 50. 12. What is a small Center to the wide circumference of the Heavens? And what are the visible Heavens, to the Heaven of Heavens that cannot contain him.

4. There is none like him in his Ubiquity, or Omnipresence. He is every where, neither man nor Angel can be in several places at the same time. Their *alicubi*, being in some place, or *ubi* excludes *alibi* elsewhere, being in another place or space: But God is every where at one and the same instant, included by, excluded out of no place, Psal. 139. 7, 12. *Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence.* Here David discourses of Gods Omnipresence, and shews it is such, that neither Heaven nor Earth; neither Sea nor Land; the depth of the Sea, the uttermost parts of the Earth; neither light nor darkness can secure us from him, or hide us from his presence, Jer. 23. 24. *Can any hide himself in secret places, that I shall not see him, saith the Lord? Do not I fill heaven and earth saith the Lord?* Oh great is the Earth, and how spacious are the Heavens! and yet he fills Heaven and Earth. How wonderful is God herein? To think he should fill up all places and distances, Oh how amazing is it!

5. There is none like God in his benignity and goodness. There are some drops of it in men and Angels, but in him there is an whole Ocean. How loth is he to be angry, how apt to forgive, how ready to shew mercy, and communicate of his goodness? Psal. 33. 5. *The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.* He hath infinite goodness in him, and he communicates thereof unto his creatures. He deals it out to Angels and men. The fowls of the
air,

air, the beasts of the field, the fish of the Sea, they all live and feast upon his goodness. There is not a fly, or worm, but it lives upon the goodness of God. And then for the state of his people in the life to come, his designs are wonderful, Psal. 31. 19. *Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee, which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee!* His wine is all good, but yet he hath some that is better than the rest, which he keeps till the last.

6. There is none like him in Majesty and Glory. There are some creatures that be very glorious. The Sun is a very glorious creature: What eye can withstand the strength of its raies, behold its glory without dazzling: when it breaks forth, the Stars disappear as ashamed of themselves: but yet all the glory thereof is but dark and despicable, in comparison of what is in God. When he steps forth, then the Sun it self disappears, as ashamed of its self. If he speak the word, the Sun is turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, *Joel 2. 31.* When he afforded a little manifestation of himself upon Mount Sinai, what a strange appearance was there? *Exod. 24. 17.* *The sight of the glory of the Lord was like consuming fire on the top of the mountain, in the eyes of the children of Israel.* Oh then what will the sight of him be when he appears in all his Glory?

2. As there is none like him in his nature, so neither is any one like him in his Laws, which do exceed all Laws whatsoever. Many Princes in the world have had good and wholsom Laws; but none had ever any comparable to the Laws of God. *Deut. 4. 8.* *And what Nation is there so great, who hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this Law, which I set before you this day.* As if he had

said, bring me a Nation of the world that hath such Laws as you have. That these Laws are none such Laws, I shall shew in five particulars

1. In their extraction there are no Laws like the Laws of God. They come from heaven. If any ask concerning them, as our Saviour did the chief Priests and Elders concerning *Johns* Baptism, whether they are from heaven, or from men, we may safely answer, from heaven. All other Laws come from the earth, but his come from heaven. There his tribunal is, and from thence he dates those Laws whereby he rules the world. It is a commendation to any thing, that it comes from heaven, *Psal.* 78. 24. *Manna* was more rare because it came from heaven, it is called heavenly food, the corn of heaven. So this Law, as *the pure river of the water of life clear as Chrystal*, *Rev.* 22. 1. *proceeds from the Throne of God and of the Lamb.* And there needs little proof of it, for it breaths forth heaven in every part of it.

2. In their supreme authority they are such as are above all Laws whatsoever, and to be observed before them. There are not any Laws of any Prince or state in the world, but the Laws of God are above them. Other Laws may and ought to be respected, but yet this will ever be the standing prerogative of the Laws of God to take place before them. Nay so far are other Laws from an equality with his, that they are no further to be obeyed than they comply with them. And the Ministers of God are, as to be faithful in declaring the whole counsel of God, that they may be clear from the blood of all men; so they are to take heed that they add not to this Law. And what *Balaam* under the constraint of the spirit of God and restraint

too, said, that should the embassadour of Christ out of good will and obedience, Numb. 24. 13. *If Balack would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the commandment of the Lord, to do either good or bad of mine own mind: but what the Lord saith that will I speak.* Nay though there be the wages of righteousness profered, and the word of a King for the performance, as *Balaam* had: yet should we not step aside from the word of God.

3. In their spirituality no laws are like the laws of God. They are such as reach the inner man, our thoughts most reserved, our reasonings most fuitable and private, our designs most deep and latent. As for the Laws of men they reach only the outward man, and no more falls under their authority or cognizance: but the word of God is a discernor of the thoughts, and intents of the heart, *Heb. 4. 12.* So that there is no man that makes conscience of it, but if he have so much as an evil thought in his heart, he is concerned about it. Now this is a commendation of Laws, that they are such as help to secure the inner man: for as long as there are evil workings, there the life cannot be good. The Law of God who is the Lord of the Conscience and to whom it only is subject, doth bid the inner man keep all right there, and so preserves the ministerial acts of the outward regular and in order.

4. In their Justice and righteousness there are no Laws comparable to them, being such, as that (may they be observed) there will be no such thing as injury or wrong in the world. This was the matter of *Moses* his challenge to the *Israelites* *Deut. 4. 8.* To shew whether any Nation under

the Sun had such Statutes and Ordinances as they. There were at that time much people in the world, and many Laws; but there were none that were attended with such Justice as the Laws of *Israel*. So far are the Laws of God from allowing evil, that they allow not any motions that way, *Mat.* 5. 4, 22, 27, 28. An angry word is forbidden as well as Murder and Adultery in the heart, nor do they allow any appearance. *1 Thef.* 5. 22. *Abstain from all appearance of evil.*

5. There are no Laws comparable to the Laws of God in respect of comfort and sweetness. If a man be distressed or exercised with trouble of mind, with inward horrors, what is there in all this world that can give him comfort, that can afford relief; but the word of God, *Psal.* 119. 50. *This is my comfort in my affliction, for thy word hath quickned me. Nothing but this word can afford relief.* *vers.* 92. *Unless thy Law had been my delight, I should then have perished in mine affliction.* As the word contains precepts of Piety and virtue; so it affords notable consolations to encourage us thereunto. What condition can a man be in, but he may receive comfort therefrom? If I lye on my sick bed and can lay hold on a promise, how reviving must it be, what a cordial to raise me up? This word is a rich Mine of comforts for all times and conditions.

6. There are no Laws like Gods in duration. They are eternal and are not to give place to any succeeding Laws. As for humane Laws they expire and are disannulled every day; but the Laws of God endure for ever. *1 Pet.* 1. 24, 25. *The grass withereth, the flower thereof falleth away; but the word of the Lord endureth for ever.*

3. There is none like God in his works, which are such as none ever did or could perform. Psal. 86. 8. *Among the Gods there is none like unto thee O Lord, neither are there any works like unto thy works.* And it was requisite that God, who is above others should perform such works as none else can do. His works are like himself, of a transcendent nature, exceeding the works of all creatures whatsoever. Now his works are. 1. That of Creation, which was so great and stupendious, that the very Angels gave forth a shout upon the view of it. Job 38. 7. *When the morning Stars sang together, and all the Sons of God shouted for joy.* As upon the building of the Temple the people shouted. Ezra 3. 11. *When they praised the Lord because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid.* Zech. 4. 7. *He shall bring forth the head stone thereof with shouting, crying, Grace, Grace, unto it.* No marvel that the Angels wonder at Gods work. For with what strange and wonderful art hath he formed every thing? As for the heavens what vast bodies are they? How rapid and orderly are they in their motions? And with what variety of curious lights are they decked and adorned? And for the Earth likewise, what a vast body is it? How strangely doth it hang in the midst of Heaven? To build Castles in the Air, for men to attempt is a proverbial vanity. God hath built this vast body of the Earth with all the burden upon it in the Air hanging on nothing but his word. With what variety of creatures doth the Earth abound? And for the Sea, what a vast body likewise is it? How doth it rowl and tumble it self, in its pride and greatness? And what rarities and wonders doth it afford? But alas, I need not to speak of these, for what Creature is there, which do's

not exprefs so much of the Creators wisdom, and skill, as is enough to fill us with admiration?

2. There's his work of Redemption, or the reconciling of the world to himself by the death of his Son, which [doubtless is the noblest act that ever the world was witness of, and such as will be admired as long as eternity it self shall endure. Upon the Creation the Angels shout, but when they come to this, they find it so full of mysteries that they are astonished, 1 Pet. 1. 12. *Which things the Angels desire to look into.* Oh Sirs, that the Word should be made flesh and dwell amongst us, and perform what he did, was a work so sublime and high, that it was not for any but God, so much as to think of it.

3. There is his work of Providence. He hath his eye upon all his Creatures, takes care of them and provides for them; so that they all have convenient and seasonable sustenance, Psal. 145. 15. *The eyes of all things wait on thee, and thou givest them their meat in due season.* He feedeth the young Lions, he hath taught all creatures whither to look, to cry to him when they lack, he gives places of shelter to them; he gives conveniency for rest, and as he provides for them; so he rules them and maintaines them in that order wherein they are, keeping one from devouring another. He keeps Devils from devouring men, and men from destroying each other. He likewise keeps the beasts of the field from offering violence to us, which otherwise would make a prey of us. He likewise restrains the Elements; and keeps them in order, which otherwise would turn the world into a *Tophet* of horror and confusion. If he let loose the fire and water a little
upon

upon each other, with what terrible thundrings and lightnings do they fill the world, enough to make the inhabitants thereof creep under the mountains for protection and defence. If he let the Air a little into the bowels of the earth, what dismal convulsions and tremblings do's it occasion? It makes it stagger and reel like a drunken man. For him to keep as he do's, the several Elements in such harmony and order, is a great work. And he likewise restrains the sea from overflowing the earth. This he insis on to *Job* as an argument of his transcendent power and greatness, *Job* 38. 11. Hitherto shalt thou come; but no farther. and here shall thy proud waves be staid. God sets doors and bars to the waters. Hereunto I might add his notable delivering his people and destroying their enemies, whereby God hath made his name great, and terrible in the world, and hath shewed a tender regard of his servants, not sparing Kingdoms for their sakes, bringing down the mighty, making the worm *Jacob* to thresh the Mountains. But

2. For what uses or purposes, there is none like him.

2. None like God to be advised with, in straits and troubles. We cannot be in such straits but he can put us into a way whereby we may escape. *1 Cor.* 10. 13. *He will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that they may be able to bear it.* What a strait was *Asaph* in about the prosperity of the wicked and the adversity of the Godly, but he adviseth with God in this matter, who was faithful and resolved him and quieted him. He could get no satisfaction till he went to him, and when he came to him he was satisfied. And all that I shall add is, that he is hard to be satisfied whom God cannot satisfie.

2. None like to God, to be invocated or called upon. For as he is able to help; so he is willing to do it: Such is his addictedness to hear prayer, that it is become one of his standing titles, *Psal. 65. 2. O thou that hearest Prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come.* No sooner sometimes have his people done praying, but he gives them a gracious Answer, *2 Kings 20. 4, 5.* Thus *Isaiah* must return immediately after the delivery of his message to *Hezekiah*, and tells him that his prayer was heard, a quick return did God make. Nay sometimes he do's it while they are praying, *Dan. 9. 20.* Whilst *Daniel* was praying, confessing his own and the people's sins, even while he was speaking in prayer, *Gabriel* being caused to flie swiftly, came and touched him, *ver. 23.* He saith, that at the beginning of his supplication, the commandment came forth, and he was sent to tell him things which should be afterwards brought to pass. Nay farther, sometimes he do's it before they pray, *Psal. 3. 4. I cryed unto the Lord with my voice, and he heard me out of his holy bill.* So our Translation renders it in the *Preter-tense*, but the word is **נִקְרָא** which is in the *future*, I will call and he heard me, as if he should have said, I was about to pray to the Lord, and am still resolved to do it: but as to that which I thought to beg of him he hath happily prevented me; for he hath given it me before I asked him for it. So *Isa. 65. 24. Before they call I will answer, and whiles they are yet speaking I will hear.* While *Daniel* was speaking God heard, and before *David* cryed to the Lord he heard him. It is much grace in him to grant our requests when we have made them, and persevered in soliciting his favour, more to answer whiles we are making our requests, but to do it before we make

make them, doth marvellously expresse the goodness of his nature.

3. There is none like God to be confided and trusted in. Men are deceitful and false, and apt to fail those that trust in them: They make fair flourishes and pretences, when a man hath no occasion to use them, and afterwards when he needs the performance of their promises, turn their backs upon him; but God is as firm as the very rocks. How ordinarily doth the Scripture propose him as the Rock of his people, Psal. 31. 3. *Thou art my rock.* Deut. 32. 4. *He is the Rock*, withal telling us, there is none worthy of that title but he, 2 Sam. 22. 32. *Who is a rock save our God? Who ever was disappointed by this God, whose ways are perfect? Who ever was ashamed that trusted in him? Psal. 22. 4. Our fathers trusted in thee, they trusted in thee and were delivered.* And Psal. 28. 7. *My heart trusted in him, and I am helped.*

4. There is none like, or beside God to be loved or desired. Such is the generosity of mans heart, that it will bestow it self upon one thing or other. Now there is none in all the world so worthy thereof as God; and therefore he forbids us to bestow it upon other things, and commands us to bestow it upon him, 1 Joh. 2. 15. *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world: if any man love the world, the love of the father is not in him.* Whom then must we bestow our love on? Prov. 23. 26. *My son give me thine heart.* And it was Asaphs sense of his peculiar fitness for it, that made him cry out *Whom have I in beaven but thee, and there is none on earth that I desire in comparison of thee.*

5. There is none like God to be worshipped and adored. He is worthy of divine and Religious wor-

worship, that is to be worshipped as the Author of what good we enjoy, the Judge of our actions, and disposer of our conditions, and there is none else worthy of it but he, Matth. 4. 10. *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.* Our Saviour speaks not here of Civil worship, for such we are to yeild to others: but such as is religious, and that he shews is peculiar to God. There is neither Saint nor Angel that is fit for it: and therefore we find, when it hath been offered to them they have refused it. *Acts* 10. 25, 26. When *Cornelius* fell down at *Peters* feet and worshipped him, *Peter* reproves him with this, *I myself also am a man.* A greater worship were the people of *Lisra* about to shew to *Barnabas* and *Paul*, *Acts* 14. 11, 14. They cryed out the Gods were come down in the likeness of men, and were about to do Sacrifice: but *Barnabas* and *Paul* rent their cloathes when they heard of it, ran in amongst them, crying, ver. 15. *We are men of like passions with you.* When *John* fell at the Angels feet to worship him, he is forbidden, *Revel.* 19. 10. *See thou do it not, I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus, Worship God.* Again, *Rev.* 22. 8, 9. When he had heard and seen those things, which before we shewed, he fell down to worship before the feet of the Angel which shewed him those things. The Angel forbids him, *See thou do it not, I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren the Prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book; Worship God.*

6. There is none like God for a man to be with, or whose glory he should desire to partake of. I pray think of this, we are each of us to choose one for our selves, a companion to abide with us to all eternity: And there is none like God. Saints are sweet com-

companions, and much good is to be had in their company: the Angels are heavenly company: but neither Saints nor Angels are like God. The Apostle urgeth it as greatest matter of comfort to the Godly, 1 Thes. 4. 17, 18. *Then (when Christ shall appear to judgment) we that are alive, shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and we shall ever be with the Lord: wherefore comfort one another with these words.*

1. *Use of Information.* Of the goodness of God that would be pleased to make known himself to us, and work us to a closure with him, that he who is so great, high, that doth infinitely transcend Heaven and Earth, Angels and men, should work us to a closure with himself. We are all naturally addicted to a Deity: Its even as easie to keep men from eating and drinking, as from the pursuit of a Deity; for the latter is as rational and agreeable to the dictates of reason, as the former is natural to the cravings of the sensual appetite. If we close not with one God, we shall with another, and men will rather have a thousand Gods than none. Now for God, when we were to make our choice, to come and tell us that he is the true God, and work us to a closing with him, Oh what goodness was it! This was a favour worth ten thousand *Hallelujahs*. Indeed by the contemplation of the works of Creation and Providence, we might have learned that there was a God, and that he was wise, mighty, good, and the like: But that we should know that the God of *Israel* was he, and that we should know him in a saving manner; that he should look after us, shine before us, put himself into our arms, make us to decline all other Gods, this is the working of God, distinguishing love, and it should be
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marvellous in our eyes. Mat. 11. 25. *I thank thee O father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.* Ver. 27. *Neither knoweth any man the Father but the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.* This saving knowledge is made known to us in and by Christ. That God should make known himself to us by his Son, and not unto the world. That he should keep us from the evil snares and practices of the world: redeem us to himself by the blood of his Son, put us into a state of salvation, should make us wonder, 1 Cor. 4. 7. *Who maketh us to differ? We have nothing but what is received.* What would have become of us, had it not been for the love of God? We might have with the World lien in wickedness; and been condemned with the world. We might have been aliens from the Israel of God, strangers to the promise of life.

2. This informs us of the happiness of those who have God for their God. Oh he is the summ and top of all perfection! There is in him whatever is requisite to the rendring either of himself blessed, or the faithful blessed in the enjoyment of him. If a man have him though he have nothing else, he hath enough; and though he hath every thing else, and be without God in the world, he hath nothing. So that upon a due stating of things, it is interest, or not interest in him, which doth determine our happiness or misery. Blessed are those who enjoy God, and miserable are those who have no saving interest in him. Those that have full Garners, store of Oxen and Sheep, were thought in a happy case; but rather happy is that people whose God is the Lord. Persons do mightily mistake good, and happiness,

happinefs looking for them in corruptible, mortal, earthly enjoyments, they count the proud and rich happy, whereas in the favour of God is good to be found; when he lifts up the light of his countenance, appears blessedness, the highest good that the soul is capable of. So Psal. 146. 5.

3. This informs us why wise and good men set such a vauw upon him, and are so much affected with him. They prefer him above all, and are ready to do or suffer any thing for him: They are ready to run through fire and water so they may but serve him, and approve themselves to him. As for *David* he had such an esteem of him, that he thought there was none that could sufficiently praise him, Psal. 106. 2. *Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord? Who can shew forth all his praise?* And for the Primitive Christians, there were no sufferings which they were not willing to undergo for him, Rev. 12. 11. *They loved not their lives unto death.* And what was the reason of this hardiness of those good Soldiers of Christ? They judged none like him, their lives but a small sacrifice for him, no longer would they live than they might enjoy him, and not unwillingly would they dye, that they might be for ever with him.

4. This informs us what a folly it is for any to attempt to be like unto God, or to compare themselves with him. Hereby the fallen Angels draw upon themselves the charge of folly, Job 4. 18. *His Angels be charged with folly.* And hereby our first parents laid themselves under their makers derision, and scorn, Gen. 3. 22. Behold the man is become as one of us to know good and evil, he was cheated into this expectation by the devil, and God doth upbraid him with the tree of life, lest he take of the tree of

life and live for ever. There was no likelihood of that when he had sinned, but he derides any such vain hope that now especially might be in him to save him from the curse. This was the ruine of the King of Babylon, Isa. 14. 12, 14. *How art thou fallen from Heaven O Lucifer, ver. 13, 14. You have the pride of the Babylonian King, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the most High. Yet should he be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit, ver. 15.* What do men think of? Do they think that when God by virtue of his essential perfections, is transcendentally above them, he will suffer them to come, and jussle him up as if they were equal to him? No, let them not imagine any such thing, God will not endure it, such presumption is likely to be their bane and ruine.

Use 2. By way of Reproof. This may reprove carnal men that make light of God, and yet there is none in heaven or on earth to be compared with him. Notwithstanding all they have heard of his Nature, Laws, Works, they disregard him, Job 21. 14, 15. *They say unto God, Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy waies. What is the Almighty that we should serve him? And what profit should we have if we pray unto him?* So far are they from preferring him above all, and yeilding him the respect, reverence, honour, praise, obedience, which is meet, that there is scarce any thing which they do not prefer before him. What lust, or temptation is there, which they will not sooner hearken to than him? Now Sirs consider what you are, Are you men or beasts? If beasts, What do you amongst men? Its fitter you should be in the fields

fields among the herds. If you are men, then open your eyes, look up to the Heavens, and see whether there be not one there, who is worthier of your affections than those trifles you keep such ado about. Its observable, how importunate the Holy Ghost is in calling upon us to be men, and to act like men. Isa. 46. 8, 9. *Shew your selves men, וְהָיִיתֶם כְּאֲנָשִׁים* In what should they play the man? Remember the former things of old, for I am God, and there is none else, I am God, and there is none like me. So 1 Cor. 16. 13. *Quit your selves like men, ἀνδρείως*. Oh what a deal of work hath the Holy Ghost to do in the reformation of ungodly men! He is not only of men to make them holy, but of beasts to make them men, and to put them upon carrying themselves as such, *The Crown is fallen from our heads, wo to us, for we have sinned.*

Use 3. of Exhortation. 1. To you who stand at a distance from God. Labour to be acquainted with him, and to get an interest in him. When we hear such a person is a person of singular worth, How ambitious are we all to be acquainted with him, and to get an interest in him? Oh how ambitious and impatiently desirous should we be to get acquaintance with, and interest in God, that fills heaven and earth, that is worthy of all glory, honour and praise! Rest not you that are at a distance till you can say, this God is my God. This is the very end for which you were made, that you should seek after him, know him, and yeild him the respect belonging to him, Acts 17. 26, 27. *He hath made all Nations of men.— That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him.* God do's so exhibit himself in his creatures that he is therein even palpable and sensible.

2. *The Exhortation*, is to you who are come near to God, are acquainted with, and have interest in him, perform the duties you owe him upon the account of his supreme excellency.

2. Let's value and love him above all. The more we enquire into his nature and concerns, the more cause we shall see we have to value and love him. There is this difference betwixt him, and his creatures: that as for his creatures, the more we know them, the less commonly we esteem of them and respect them: But for God, the more we know him, the more cause we shall still find that we have to value and love him. Here looking increases loving, as it causeth likeing.

2. Let's rejoyce in him. If we have a Relation or Friend that is indued with high virtues, we count it matter of great joy. What matter of joy then should we count it, that he whom we have chosen for our God, and whom we make account for ever to dwell with, is indued with such transcendent perfections? All those excellencies which are spread throughout the whole volume of the Creation, are not only contained in him; but infinitely exceeded by him. And Oh what matter of joy is this! such a well-spring is he of joy and gladness, that when we can rejoyce in nothing else, we may rejoyce in him, *Habb.* 3. 17, 18. Let what will come of loss, and though I be cut off from worldly comforts, yet will I rejoyce in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation. Oh there is in him matter of fresh and everlasting joy! *Phil.* 4. 4. *Rejoyce in the Lord alwaies, and again I say rejoyce.*

3. Is there none like God, then let us glory in him, and boast of him. Though there is nothing in the world we may glory in, yet in the Lord may

we glory, Jer. 9. 23, 24. Wisdom, strength, or riches are not to be boasted of: *But let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth, and knoweth me, that I am the Lord. He is the excellency of Jacob,* Amos 8. 7. He is our glory, Jer. 2. 11. *My people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit.* He is our praise, Deut. 10. 21. *He is thy praise, and he is thy God* And therefore let us extoll him, and lift him up: whilst the poor blind Heathens are praising their Gods of Gold, Silver, Brasse, Iron, Wood, Stone, Dan. 5. 4. Shall we sit still and hold our peace? Oh no, let our tongues rather be as the pen of a ready writer. As long as we have tongues to speak with, let us imploy the in praising him, Psal. 104. 33: *I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live, I will sing praise to my God, while I have my being.* Such are his perfections, that we can never praise him sufficiently, *Stand up, say the Levites,* Nehem. 9. 5. *and bless the Lord your God for ever and ever.* And blessed be thy glorious name which is exalted above all blessings and praise, Psalm 106. 2. *Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord? Who can shew forth all his praise?*

4. Let's be willing to be taught and ruled by him. Who so fit to rule and teach us as the supream being? How do we find good men very ready to comply with the instructions of God? Heb. 11, 8, 17. *Abraham* obeyed the command to leave his own Country, went out not knowing whither he went; He doth *Cacam obedientiam prestare*, which to do to men is folly, but to do to God is greatest wisdom. *Abraham* disputes not the case, but goes and offers up *Isaac*; How so? That is, he was willing, and the will is accepted for the deed,

5. Let us adhere and keep close to him, whatever difficulties, trials, discouragements, lye in the way. We see we cannot possibly chose one like to him; nor can we follow one whose good guidance we may be more sure of. As *Abraham* when he was so hard tasked, yet readily obeys; so must we, and not only be directed by him, but yeild ready obedience without disputing, quarrelling, scrupling, so are we in every respect to own God as our God. Gen. 28, 21. 22. *Jacob* vowed, *If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and rayment to put on, so that I come again to my fathers house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God.* Here *Jacob* doth not capitulate with God upon any high terms: What if God will not perform these conditions, shall he not be *Jacobs* God? Yes: But if he give me meat, and rayment, and return me to my Fathers house, he shall be much more my God. This shall be an additional obligation upon him. *All people will walk every one in the name of his God, and we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever.* When men are blindly busie, groping for God, though he be not far from them, and adoring the creature instead of the Creator, who is blessed for ever: let us be better, and more wisely imployed in seeking, finding, and serving the Lord our God, in whom we live, move, and have our being. We may make tryal of as many as we please; but when we have done, we shall have cause to say, with revolting *Israel*, *Hos. 2. 7. I will go and return to my first Husband; for then was it better with me than now.* Neither Heaven nor earth can afford us a God like him.

4. *Use of Comfort to you who have made choice of God for your God.* What a comfort must it needs be to a man, that he hath a God to whom none is like in Heaven or Earth? Why, this is your case; and this is that which may swallow up all your sorrows, and wipe away all your tears. Oh what comfort have good men taken herein! They have feasted themselves in the thoughts of his mercy, that God was their God, 1 Sam. 30. 6. *David encouraged himself in the Lord his God.* Psal. 48. 14. *This God is our God for ever and ever, he will be our guide even unto death.* He is no worse, no less good now than he was then, the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever. The differences of time, make no difference in him. A poor man may say, though I am not so rich and honourable as other men are; yet for a God I dare compare with the greatest of them all: Wherein I am defective, there is enough in him to make it out. With this I will comfort my self as *Asaph, Whom have I in Heaven but thee, and there is none on earth that I desire besides thee.*

 SERMON VII.

Psalms 73. 26.

My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.

HAVING done with the former verses, we are now come to this, wherein the Psalmist goes on in setting forth the excellency of God, shewing of what great use and advantage he was to him in the time of his affliction and distress. In the preceding words he expresseth it in a more general way, and here he doth more particularly enlarge on Gods excellency in giving an account of special favours and kindnesses, that he had testified towards him and given to him in his own person. The words contain two parts.

1. The Psalmist sets down his afflictions and distress; and these are expressed in two passages כלה שאר *My flesh faileth*. By flesh here as *Mu-* is and others note, we are to understand the body, which in Scripture is sometimes spoken of under that notion, Prov. 5. 11, *And thou mourn at the last.* בכלות בשרך ושארך *when thy flesh and thy body are consumed*. Then for the word כלה here rendered *faileth*. It is variously read by some, *my flesh did fail me*: By others, *When it doth fail me*; by

by others, *Although and if it fail me.* But the difference is not very considerable. His meaning is plainly this, that his body was liable to fail him, and that he made account it would so do, though he had been of an active body; a strong and healthful complexion, strengthened by exercise and notable achievements. Yet his flesh would fail. 2. To aggravate the affliction he adds, **וּלְבָבִי** and my heart faileth. By heart, as Muis notes, we are to understand the soul, for as the heart is the principal part of the body, so it is *animæ sedes*. Now this was a great aggravation of the Psalmists affliction and trouble; that his soul failed him as well as the body. When the body fails, the soul may support it, but when the soul failes, what can a poor creature do? Prov. 18. 4. *The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmities: but a wounded spirit who can bear?* If I have a languishing body, but a vigorous soul; the liveliness and cheerfulness of one, will help to bear the infirmities of the other: but if the body and soul both droop under affliction, the man is brought to a sad pass.

2. The Psalmist sets down the advantage or relief that God afforded him. This he expresses likewise in two passages.

1. **עוֹמֵה לִבִּי חֲלָהִים** God is the strength of my heart, or according to the Hebrew, *God is the rock of my heart.* But you'll say why saith he nothing of Gods helping his body? God sustains his soul, and his soul sustains his body. 2. **וְחֶלְקִי לְעוֹלָם** And my portion for ever. As though he had said, He is not only of use to me for the present, but he will be so for ever. I see such lines in his love to me, as reach into eternity it self. And this doth much refresh my drooping heart, that he will deal well with me

me not only here, but hereafter. Time will soon be run out and gone. All the business is, how it will go with us for ever. I have this to comfort me, *that God will be my portion for ever.* He will deal well with me to eternity, let it be as long as it will. I look, and look into eternity and see no end of his love, when my soul and body have failed me over and over again, I have a rock in heaven as firm as my heart can wish. In him will I repose my confidence, and fix my hope for ever.

Doct. That the bodies and souls even of good men are apt to fail them in time of affliction and distress, or the affliction and distress of good men is sometimes so great, that their very bodies and souls are apt to fail them therein. Sometimes the cup that God puts into their hands is so bitter, that it makes their hands shake, and their hearts fail. Lesser afflictions they can bear up under: but when the great billows of God and the waves pass over them, then their souls are ready to faint. How good a man was *Asaph*, yet he cries out. *My flesh and my heart faileth.* This I shall handle a little more distinctly, and, 1. I shall shew that sometimes their bodies fail them; and this is so familiar and evident, that I need not spend many words about it. God long ago issued forth this decree, Gen. 3. 19. *Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return.* This he hath been putting in execution throughout all generations ever since. Now there are three waies whereby the bodies even of good men, do fail them.

1. By the decay of their senses; those active and pleasant Organs, when evil daies come, do fail to perform the services for which they were designed, an instance whereof, we have in *Barzillai the Giliadite,*

dite, 2 Sam. 19. 35. *I am fourscore years old this day. Can thy servant tast what I eat, or what I drink? Can I hear any more the voice of singing men?* — and thus it is with others. First one thing fails then another. First the eye grows dim, then the ear grows deaf: one sence fails after another, till all of them be disabled from their proper work.

2. By the decay of their strength. When evill daies come, then strength failes and leaves the body labouring under feebleness and weakness. How strong a man was *David*, such was his strength, that he could draw in pieces a bow of steel, Psal. 18. 34. *So that a Bow of Steel is broken by mine armes.* And yet what complaints have we of the failing of his strength? Psal. 38. 10. *My heart panteth, my strength faileth me, as for thee light of mine eyes it is gone from me.* Before he could encounter with a *Lion*, a *Bear*, a *Goliath*, But now he is weak. Even the most vigorous and active, when evil daies come, like *Sampson* when his hair was cut, find themselves bereaved of their former strength.

3. By the decay of their health. Besides the loss of our senses and strength, we are subject to sickness and diseases, which contribute much towards the discomfort of our lives. How fearfull was good *Hezekiah*, lest God would cut him off with pining sickness? Isa. 38. 12. *Mine age is departed and is removed from me as a shepherds tent: I have cut off like a weaver, my life: He will cut me off with pining sickness.* And what a sickly time was it among the *Corinthians* when they had prophaned the Lords Supper. 1 Cor. 11. 30. *For this cause many are weak and sickly amongst you, and many sleep.* Oh what fainting hearts, pale faces and dole-
full

full complaints attend the sons of men? They spend their daies in sorrow, and after go to the grave.

2. Sometimes their souls fail them. There lies their chief strength, yet Psal. 143. 7. כִּלְתָה רוּחִי *My spirit faileth*, the same word with that in the Text. As their bodies have their infirmities, so their souls have theirs by vertue whereof, they are sometimes brought very low. Now their souls fail them three waies.

1. By sorrow. Sometimes they are so affected with their afflictions, that they are even overwhelmed with sorrow Psal. 40. 12. *Innumerable evils have compassed me about, mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up: they are more than the hairs of mine head; therefore mine heart faileth me.* Or my heart hath left and forsaken me, that *præ dolore* as *Vatablus* notes, so Cant. 5. 6. *My soul failed when he spake*, נִפְסִי יָצָאָה *Animæ mea Egressa est. My soul went out of me.* She fell into a sad *delquium* or fainting fit; and what is the reason? Why, it was her sorrow upon the account of her former security. As if she had said. Oh how have I played the beast? What noble, importunate, constant love have I neglected and abused? Oh how shall I ever look my Lord in the face, or restore my self into his favour?

2. By fear. They see there are dangers before them, and therewith they are so affected that their souls fail within them. Thus as one of *Jacobs* sons opens his sack, he finds his money in the mouth of the sack, tells his brethren and their hearts failed them, וַיִּצָּא לֵבָם. Their heart went out of them and they were afraid. They knew not what this might work; what might be the issue of things,
and

and fearing the worst their hearts over-ran them. This effect of fear is expressed by the melting of the heart, thus the hearts of the *Canaanites* melted with fear, Josh. 5. 1. *Your terror* (saith *Rahab* to the spies) Josh. 2. 9. 10. *is fallen upon us, and all the inhabitants of the Land faint because of you,* vers. 11. *Our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man,* in many other places, Isa 13. 7. *Nabum* 2. 10. Ezek. 21. 7. Whether it be by grief, as *Psal.* 119. 28. And so the heart melts in tears or fear which as it were, causeth colliquation or melting.

3. By distrust, judging of the issue of things by causes, they sometimes despair of deliverance and give up themselves for gone, so 1 Sam. 22. 1. *David said in his heart, I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul.* His heart sinks through distrust, and he thinks to take an unwarrantable course for his security. Notwithstanding his brave and heroick mind at other times and upon other occasions which made him to attempt difficulties, slight discouragements notwithstanding the experience of Gods goodness, and the promises God had made him of the Kingdom: yet his heart failing, and his spirit being sunk down into a fit of despondency, he thus saith in his heart, and resolves on a course to the great offence of his friends, triumph of his enemies, and dishonour of true religion.

3. Why God suffers it to be thus with people, that their bodies and souls should fail.

1. That he may shew them their frailty and weakness, teach them humility, and make them base and vile in their own eyes. When a man finds both body and soul shrinking him, and failing him, he is ready to cry out, Lord what a poor Creature

am I? What am I that I should glory in my self, or behold my self with any complacency or delight? When *Jobs* body and soul had failed him, what opinion had he of himself? or how did he stand affected towards himself? Did he admire himself, or was he inamoured of himself? No, *Job* 42. 6. *Wherefore I abhor my self, and repent in dust and ashes.*

2. That he may thereby excite them to look up to him, and exercise dependance on him. As long as we find a sufficiency in our selves, we seldom have any great regard to God; but when we see our selves unable to provide for our own welfare, then we begin to look up to him. And for this cause, *1 Cor.* 1. 9. He sends thorns into our beds that he should have little ease there; he brings afflictions that threatens death that we may look up. We had the sentence of death in our selves, that we should not trust in our selves, but in God which raised the dead. When as to natural helps and hopes they are lost, that they may look up, and throw the arms of faith about him, he deprives us of all stayes and refuges, that we may exercise dependance on him, and stay our selves upon our God.

3. That he may thereby provoke us, to look after a state wherein we may be free from these *Delinquims*, or failings, both of body and soul, which here we are liable to. When a man meets with inconveniencies in his journey, he begins to wish himself at home: So when a good man is exercised with decay in his senses, strength, health on the one hand, and with sorrow, fear, distrust on the other, then he begins to grow weary of the world, he thinks of God and heaven, with great longing to be with God, to be in heaven. Then he cries
out

out, Oh what should I do here ! Where shall I have relief ? Oh that I were with my God ! So *Job* 14. 13. desires that God would hide him in the grave, that he would keep him secret until his wrath was past : Not that he desired the grave it self, or thought it pleasant to lye in putrefaction and rottenness ; but as an occasion of being conveyed into a better state and place.

Use. Is it so that both body and soul of good men do fail them in affliction ? then it is useful by way of Information, to shew us what a poor vain thing man is. How unable is he to stand before his Makers displeasure ? In his prosperity how doth he vaunt himself ? How goodly is he in his own eyes, and what confidence doth he put in his own abilities ? But when his maker takes him in hand, what a trivial thing is he, *Job* 4. 19. He is crushed before the moth, that is, sooner then a moth is crushed betwixt a mans fingers, he is ground to powder, if God lay his hand upon him ; or he is such a trivial thing, that he is not able to stand in the presence of such a despicable creature as the moth, this contemptible creature prevails upon him, and conquers him.

2. *Use of Exhortation.* 1. Let us beware what stress we lay either upon body or soul. *Alas*, what are they that we should confide in them ? If God do but lay his finger on them, they droop and languish. What is the bravest spirit in the world, when God comes and takes him by the arm, and leads him away to judgment ? What work did two or three words writ upon the wall, make with the great *Babylonian Monarch*, *Dan.* 5. 5, 6. *His countenance was changed, his thoughts troubled, the joints of his loins loosed, and his knees smote one against another.*

other. This being our nature, What are we, that we should put confidence in our selves? *Isa. 2. 22.* We may neither trust in others, neither may others trust in us, neither may we trust in our selves? *Jer. 17. 5.* *Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord.* What must we do then? *Isa. 2. 22.* *Cease from man whose breath is in his nostrils, for wherein is he to be accounted of?*

2. Let's not wonder if sometimes both body and soul fail us. We do not know how many of these fits we may be exercised with, and when they befall us let's not wonder at it; its nothing but what the best of Gods servants are liable to, *1 Pet. 4. 12.* *Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial, which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you.* When afflictions overtake us, we are ready to wonder at it, and to say, it was never on this wise. Never was any sorrow like to my sorrow, whereas there is no reason to say so, afflictions are ordinary to the people of God.

3. Let us get an interest in God, that so when they fail us, he may stand by us and help us, that when one of our fainting fits comes, his left hand may be under our heads, and his right hand may imbrace us. Let our fits be what they will, if God stand by us, and be with us, we are safe enough; Who shall be against us? We need not fear the frowns of men, the want of friends, and comfort, if God befriend and afford his grace unto us. But if he be not with us, what will become of us? *Psal. 94. 17.* *Unless the Lord had been my help, my soul had almost dwelt in silence, brevi habitasset,* as it is in the margent of your Bibles, *quickly.* God can help us, whether exercised with fainting in soul

soul or body. It is good to get an interest in God, for this was *Asaph's* happiness, that though both soul and body failed him, yet God stuck to him, was the strength of his heart, and portion for ever. So we come to the second part of this 26th Verse. The Psalmist in the former part of the verse having set down his affliction, he doth in the latter set down the advantage he had from God against it, and that in these two passages: *God is the strength of my heart.* (2) *And my portion for ever.* From the former of which this point offers it self.

Doct. 1. That God is the strength of the hearts of his people in their afflictions and distress: Or more briefly thus, God is the strength of his people. He looks after them, takes care of them, and supplies them with strength according as they stand in need. There is a very high and lofty passage, *Deut. 33. 26, 27.* As when a person is in a fainting condition, we take him into our arms, and hold up his head. So *Cant. 2. 6,* *His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth imbrace me,* If we look farther into Scripture, we shall find that the eminentest of Gods servants, and such as were best furnished with abilities, have in down right terms acknowledged that he is their strength. So *Exod. 15. 2.* Notwithstanding all his wisdom, power, and greatness; yet he acknowledges it was God that was his strength, who inabled him to accomplish those great things he had brought to pass. So *Psal. 18. 1.* *I will love thee O Lord my strength,* in the following words he shews, that he was the Rock of his heart, *The Lord is my rock my fortress.— My strength in whom I trust.* In the Original, as here, *My rock in whom I will trust.* We have the like from Christ himself, *Isa. 49. 5.* *My God shall be my strength.*

Now that you may better understand the reason of my following Method, you are to know, that what is here mentioned touching Gods being the strength of his servants, is proposed by way of Antidote to their several maladies, and distresses both in body and soul, insisted on before. So that if I will closely pursue the intent of the Text, I must reflect upon the evils, which I before represented them liable to, and shew what a remedy he is against them, and what relief he affords them. And,

1. He relieves them against the maladies of their bodies. Though their bodies are frail, and subject to many distempers, yet he hath relief for them against them all. There is not any distemper so mortal or dangerous, but he can afford them help against it, Psal. 116. 6. *I was brought low, and he helped me.*

1. He relieves them against the decays of their senses. He sometimes preserves them in a strong degree of vigour, beyond what could reasonably be expected from the abilities and power of nature. How old a man was *Moses*? He was an hundred and twenty years old, yet it is said, Deut. 34. 7. *His eyes were not dim, nor his natural force abated.* God is the Lord of nature, and hath the disposal of the several ordinances thereof, so that he can inforce or restrain them, execute or suspend them, according as he sees good. He can put a youth into the state of an old man, and an old man into the state of a youth, and dispose of all persons, and their concerns as he sees good.

2. He relieves them against the decay of their strength. That he sometimes marvellously renews, and raises to an height beyond all probability and expect-

expectation, as to outward and bodily strength, as well as spiritual vigour: these words in *Isa. 40.29,31.* is verified: *He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he encreases strength. They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength. So the Lord doth alter the course of nature, that when his servants are in a withering condition, he renews their strength, he works vigour and activity in them, and enables them to do great things, when he disables and brings down the strength of the mighty. Psal. 18. 29, 32, 33. 34. By thee I have run through a troop, and by my God have I leaped over a wall. Who is a rock, save our God? It is God that guideth me with strength. He maketh my feet like hinds feet. He teacheth my hands to war, so that a bow of steel is broken by my arms.* David was naturally a man of great strength, and activity; yet besides that, God favoured him with an auxiliary extraordinary strength, whereby he was fitted for those great services he performed.

3. He relieves them against the decay of their health. He hath many distempers, whereby to exercise the sons of men, and bring them to their graves; but yet there is none which he cannot either prevent or heal, *Psal. 103. 3, 4. Who healeth all thy diseases, who redeemeth thy life from destruction.* Let the distemper be what it will, the Ague, Fever, Stone, Gout: yet he is able to prevent or cure it. Some distempers are so difficult and incurable, that they are looked upon as *Ludibria medicorum*, the scorn and disgrace of Physitians: But there is no distemper in the world, which God is not able to heal and cure. He is not under any restraint, but what he lays upon himself, *Psal. 135. 6. Whatsoever he pleaseth he doth in heaven and in earth.* What

his soul desireth that he doth, Job 23. 13. And he is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, Ephes. 3. 20. Oh the greatness of the Lord our God, and what security is there here for us in the greatest and most dangerous estate and condition!

2. He relieves them against the maladies of their souls. He is a Physician both for body and soul, and understands the maladies and distempers of the one as well as the other, and can heal those which belong to the latter, as well as those which belong to the former. And,

1. He relieves them against their greatest sorrow. Under their greatest troubles and discouragements, he can cheer up their souls, and make them pleasant and joyful, 2 Cor. 2. 14. *Thanks be to God, who alwaies causeth us to triumph in Christ.* Here are two things to be considered. 1. What a condition the Apostles were in as to their outward concernments, they were even as miserable as men could be. 1 Cor. 4. 13. *Accounted as the filth of the world, and the off-scouring of all things.* 2. What God did for them. Times of triumph, are times of extraordinary joy: yet such was the goodness of God to them, that he did not only cause them to triumph; but this he did for them in the time when their troubles, and the power of the wicked caused their enemies to triumph.

2. He relieves them against fear. He many times works them to such a recumbency, and dependence on him, as causes all their fear to cease and vanish, Psal. 3. 6. *I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people, that have set themselves against me round about.* If God assist, no Lion, Bear, or monster of men, shall do any thing to the quelling of the hearts of Believers. And this was not a favour peculiar to him, but

but such as he vouchsafes to other [of his faithful servants. Psal. 112. 7. *He shall not be afraid of evil tidings, his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.* Notwithstanding the outward effect, and visible tendency of things to the contrary, yet he works in them this perswasion, that the issue of things will be good, whereby he dissolves and scatters those fears which otherwise would perplex and annoy them.

3. He relieves them against their distrust. Sometimes their oppositions, difficulties, and dangers, are so great, that their very hearts are ready to sink and faint within them. Now at such a time he often comes in, bears up their hearts, and satisfies them, resolves their doubts, and satisfies their jealousies. You know who said, 1 Sam. 27. 1. *I shall perish one day by the hand of Saul.* But Psal. 118. 17. we have him in another temper, then, saith he, *I shall not dye, but live, and declare the works of the Lord.* Oh how doth faith change the language of the soul, and what happy alterations doth it work therein?

Now we shall proceed to the Reasons:

Reas. 1. Is drawn from the benignity, kindness, and goodness of his own nature, which puts him upon those gracious appearances, wherewith he is upon all occasions so ready to favour his people. Other reasons may be assigned; but this is the fundamental, Original, Sovereign Reason, which gives birth and existence to those that follow, Rom. 9. 15. *I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy.* It is the goodness of his nature that puts him upon those eminent appearings, for the support and deliverance of his people.

2. From their necessity, which is such as cries aloud for it. Alas, who, or what are they, that they should be able to bear up against the maladies

either of body or soul? Now God being aware of this, doth in compliance with their necessities, afford them relief, Deut. 32. 36. *The Lord shall judge his people, and repent himself for his servants when he seeth that their power is gone, and there is none shut up or left.* This is set down, not only as an account of the time when God would help them, but likewise as the reason wherefore he would do it. Men commonly are readiest to help us, when we have least need: but God, when we have most. He loves to appear in difficult cases, and shew himself, when he may best serve his own praise.

3. From that service which he may hereby do to his own glory. To relieve a distressed people, is a noble act, and such as is meet to commend the nature of God to us. And there is not any person who any hath tincture of true piety, or gratitude, but being strengthened by God, will bless and praise him for it. Exod. 15. 2. *The Lord is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation, he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation, my fathers God, and I will exalt him.* The people of God have ever resolved to make the Lord, that hath appeared as their strength, their song, Psal. 118. 14. *The Lord is my strength and song.* And for this end doth God become the strength of his people, to this end, to make their hearts and mouths full of the praises of God their deliverer. Psal. 30. 11, 12. *Thou hast turned for me, my mourning into dancing: thou hast put off my sackcloth, and guided me with gladness: To the end that my glory may sing praise to thee, and not be silent, O Lord my God I will give thanks unto thee for ever.*

Use 1. of Information. If it be thus that God is the strength of his people. 1. We may see whence

it is that the people of God bear up, and hold out under such great oppositions and difficulties. Satan he is against them, and for the World that's against them, and as if these were not sufficient, they have infirmities both of body and soul to encounter with, and yet they hold out. Now whence happens this, 2 Tim. 4: 16, 17. *Though all men forsook me, notwithstanding, saith Paul, the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me, and I was delivered out of the mouth of the Lion.* God stood by him, bound the Emperors hands that he could do nothing against him.

2. It appears whence it comes to pass, that they accomplish such great things. What great and famous things did *Moses, Joshua, Gideon, David*, and others accomplish? Whence had they the might, power, and victory. It was not by their might, their puissance, by their strength that they prevailed, but the spirit of God, *Phil. 4. 13. I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me.*

3. What folly and unworthiness it is in good men to appear against God, or do any thing to his dishonour, or against his interest: It is no less than to appear, and fight against their own strength. Should you see a man strike at, and beat his own arm, you would take it for a piece of strange madness: And yet no less madness is it for any one to ingage against God, to ingage against him who is his strength. For men to fight against him, is to kick against the pricks, a folly to a Proverb: and for the people of God to oppose him, is for *Israel* to oppugne the strength of *Israel*, to fight against themselves. *He that sinneth against me, wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death, Prov. 8. 36.*

2. *Use of Exhortation.*

2. Let us in time of affliction

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fiction of body and soul, flee unto him and make use of him, who is the strength of our life. When any thing ailes us either in body or soul, let us have recourse to him, for he is abundant in strength, he is mighty in strength and wisdom, Job 36.5. None can enter the lists with him. *Who hath been his counsellor?* His strength is everlasting. Isa. 26.4. *In the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.* He is ready to communicate it to his people, Isa. 41. 10. *I am thy God, I will strengthen thee.* And what more can we desire to encourage us to have recourse to him?

2. Let us plead it to him, when we are in need of help from him. Let's urge it to him, whether he be not our strength, and in case he be, let us plead with all reverence and holy boldness, whether it be not proper for him to help us, Psal. 43.2. *For thou art the God of my strength, why dost thou cast me off?* Thou hast caused me to hope in thee; thou hast said, that thou wouldst be my strength; thou hast engaged that thou wilt not cast them off that cast their concerns on thee, that trust in thee, and have hoped and trusted in this word; I have refused all other things as empty vanities that cannot help, and wilt thou cast me off? Let men and Angels see that thou art faithful, and wilt not in thy works, fly off from thy word. Lord let it be unto me according to thy good word of promise, and as thou hast been unto thy people, make it appear, as 1 Sam. 15. 29. *That the strength of Israel will not lie.*

3. When we undertake the performances of duty, let us undertake and perform them in his strength. Distrusting our own strength, let us rely and depend upon his. You know the voice that came

came down to *Augustine, In te stas & non stas*. Such is the weakness of our own strength that if we have no more than it, we shall do just nothing. When we ingage in any duty, pray, read, hear or sing, let us rely on him to help us to the acceptable performances, to help our infirmities, when we know not how to offer them as we ought, and to bless us in the deed. *Psal. 71. 16. I will go in the strength of the Lord God. I will make mention of thy righteousness even of thine only.* We look upon our selves strong enough to manage duties, and this hath been the overthrow of many a duty, that we have horribly fail'd in it, and lost the blessing of it.

4. Let's not measure our safety or welfare by any thing in our selves, but by the strength of God. If we measure our strength and welfare by what is in our selves, we shall be despairing and fainting every day, but measuring it by him, we shall be capable of preserving our selves in a state of hope and confidence, when we have such difficulties before us, we may pass the sentence of death on our selves without blame, and cast off our confidence and let our expectation perish, but whiles they are no other than such as he is able to deal with, there is ground of hope, stand still saith *Moses* to the murmuring *Israelites* and see the salvation of the Lord. Herein we commonly miss it, that we measure our safety by a wrong rule.

5. Let us ascribe our enduring of sufferings, and performance of duties unto him. If we suffer patiently, bear under the yoke of Christ, let us give the praise to God, saying not to us, but to thy name give the glory, *Psal. 115. 1.* 'Tis not our own strength, not our own courage that can bear us up under, or get us out of trouble. The *Psal-*
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mist ascribes strength to the Lord, as that which belongs to him, dare not usurpe and attribute to himself his deliverances, Psal. 59. 17. *Unto thee O my strength will I sing, for God is my defence and the God of my mercy.*

3. *Use of Comfort.* Is God the strength of his people when they are exercised with any distress? Here then is comfort for you who labour under saylings both of body and mind. You are exercised perhaps with decays in your senses, strength, health: with sorrow, fear, distrust, and find your own ability insufficient to encounter herewith. However, be of good cheer, God is engaged for you, and what condition can you be in which God is not able to deliver you out of? It is not your own strength, but his, which you have to trust to. Which is a consideration so full of comfort, that it may afford us relief in the lowest condition, in the saddest times and most difficult seasons. How low was the condition of *Asaph*? yet he settles his thoughts and quiets himself with this consideration, *That God was his strength, the strength of his heart and his portion for ever.*

Doct. 2. That God is the portion of his people. Notwithstanding all his perfections, sufficiency and fulness; yet he hath bestowed and settled himself upon them for all those advantages and uses, which a portion is serviceable to. Not judging any thing in the world good enough to be a portion for them, he hath bestowed himself upon them. Herein he hath so ordered things, that the business stands reciprocally, 1. *They are his portion*, Deut. 32. 9. *The Lords portion is his people*, Jacob is the lot of his inheritance, Zach. 2. 12. *And the Lord shall inherit Judah his portion in the holy Land.* They are

are the portion of mankind that he makes his peculiar, that he will own and delight in. And then 2. *He is their portion.* Psal. 119. 157. *Thou art my portion O Lord.* Lament. 3. 24. *The Lord is my portion saith my soul.* And that you may not think he restrains himself to particular persons, he is said to be the portion of *Jacob.* Jer. 10. 16. *The portion of Jacob is not like them.* Now there is a great deal of difference betwixt the grounds of their being his portion, and his being theirs. They are said to be his portion, inasmuch as he hath chosen them from amongst all the people in the world to profess his name, hold communion with him, and serve him. And he is said to be their portion inasmuch as he hath settled himself upon them, in order to their sustentation and happiness. First, I shall shew what a portion is, and Secondly, what a portion God is to his people.

1. What a portion is. To that I answer, that a mans portion, as you that are but little experienced in the world know, is a certain measure or parcel of Money, Lands or Goods which is made over to him, and settled upon him for his subsistence and livelihood. Thus the prodigal, Luke 15. 12. saith to his Father *give me the portion of goods that falleth to me.* Now when the Scripture saith that God is the portion of his people, we are to understand that he is somewhat bearing resemblance thereunto; as that he hath made over himself to his people, and settled himself upon them, for the subsistence and livelihood both of their bodies and souls. Therefore the Priests and *Levites* should have no inheritance among their brethren, because that the Lord was their inheritance, Deut. 18. 2. They were not to be sharers in the spoyle taken from the enemy as the other

other tribes were , yet they had this to recompence it, that God was their inheritance, who did in a peculiar way make provision for their supply.

2. VVhat kind of a portion God is. And 1. He is a real and substantial portion. As for the things of the world , they are shadows and dreams, void of reality and substance. Prov. 22.5. VVorldly wealth is a thing of such a nature , that it hath no real existence. It is rather an empty shew than any real being, so Hof. 12. 1. *Ephraim feedeth on wind, and followeth after the East wind.* Frivolous and foolish helps and comforts. What bad food is the Wind ? It may distemper and disorder us , but it cannot satisfie and nourish us. Yet this is the state of all worldly things , that they are of an airy windy nature , void of matter and substance. But it is not so with God, he hath substance in him, insomuch that what he seems to be , that we shall find him to the full. Prov. 8. 21. *That I may cause those that love me to inherit substance, and I will fill their treasures .* *W* is the word for substance , which signifies that which is really or as a *Lapide* as others note *rem solide, vereque subsistentem*, such a thing as is not a shadow, or meer resemblance, but hath a solid and true subsistence. As for worldly portions they afford an appearance , but want substance , but now God is such a portion as hath substance, durable substance and precious.

2. He is a plentiful portion. Some have portions, but they are not commensurate to what is required to their subsistence , but in God there is whatsoever is necessary for our subsistence, comfort and happines. He is exercised with strange wants, whom God is not able to supply. Psal. 50. 12. *The World is mine and the fulness thereof.* And besides the world, he hath

hath an inexhaustible fulness in himself, which would afford sufficient supply, though the world should utterly fail, Gen. 15. 1. *I am thy shield* (saith God to *Abram*) *and thy exceeding great reward.* It was he that made the world, and he can supply his servants without it. He can create comforts for his people if he sees needful. And sooner than they shall want what is necessary for them, he will proceed beyond the ordinary way of his providence, and shew a miraculous power in raising supplies. They have a God al sufficient, whom no difficulty can pose, and is able to bring about what is possible to be done, and nothing can be necessary to any which is impossible to be, Gen. 17. 1. *I am the Almighty God, walk before me and be thou perfect.*

3. He is a satisfying portion. Though the portions of persons are never so great, yet how few are satisfied therewith? Nay commonly the more they have, the further they are from satisfaction and contentment, Eccl. 5. 10. *He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver, nor he that loveth abundance with increase.* How insatiable are mens desires, and how do their plentiful enjoyment sharpen their appetite to more, and beget discontented cravings to an endless dissatisfaction and toil for that which doth not satiate? But God doth satisfy the souls of his people, Jer. 31. 14. *And I will satiate the soul of the Priests with fatness, and my people shall be satisfied with goodness, saith the Lord.* He needs must be very unreasonable whom God will not satisfy.

4. He is such a Portion as can make himself a blessing to us. Now this is more than any other portion or the donor thereof can do. Men may bestow portions

portions : but they cannot make them blessings to those who have them. A father may leave his child a portion : but he cannot command a blessing upon it, nor absolutely promise himself that the child shall not turn it into a curse : but God hath blessings at command, Psal. 133. 3. *As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended from the mountains of Zion, for there the Lord commanded the blessing even life for evermore.* And it is not to be conceived how a man should have him for his portion, and not have a blessing in him. What, have blessedness it self, and not have a blessing of him ? that cannot be imagined.

5. He is an everlasting Portion. He is such, that he can neither be taken from us, nor diminished. All the arts of men and devils cannot take him from his people. *Plutarch* tells of the *Tyrrians*, that they chained up their gods, lest their enemies by charms, or such like arts, should entice them from them. And pitiful Gods they were, first that might be chained. 2. That must be chained lest they overrun those who confided in them. Our God forsaketh not those that trust in him. And as he cannot be taken from his people, so after they have lived upon him thousands of years, they will find him as full as ever they did before. He is *sons indeficiens*, a never failing fountain. Notwithstanding his supplying heaven and earth from the Creation to this day, yet he's as full as ever he was before. Though the Sun by its shining, and the Sea by its flowing should suffer a diminution, the one in its light, the other in its water ; yet God after all his communications will be as full as ever, for he is their Portion for ever.

3. How became he their portion ? *Ans.* It was his own act and deed. He did of his own free accord convey himself to us, and settle himself upon us. Seeing us a poor, lost and undone people, he did of his own meer grace and compassion bestow himself upon us, *Ezek. 16. 8. I spread my skirt over thee and covered thy nakedness, &c.* Oh what a great act of grace was this ! If a man of a great Estate, seeing a poor distressed child forsaken, forlorn, should adopt him for his Son, and settle all he hath upon him, would not all look upon this as a compassionate act ? Oh how greatly hath God condescended so to compassionate sinners, lying in their blood and filthiness, as to take them in unto himself, to give them an inheritance amongst those that are sanctified !

3. *Use of Information.* 1. Of the rich, wealthy, and happy condition of the servants of God. Of all people in the world they are best provided for ; God who is the Lord of all

all is their portion. What then can they want? If Allsufficiency it self may want, then they may want; but that being impossible, we may make account that they will not want, Psal. 23.

1. *The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.* Psal. 34. 9. *There is no want to them that fear him.* Psal. 84. 11. *No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.*

2. We may be informed, what little cause good men have to complain. Sometimes their spirits are very unquiet, discontented and unsatisfied with their present condition, and very heavy, and sad complaints proceed from them. Now alas what reason is there for this? Have they not God for their portion, and is he not all, and hath he not all, and doth not the disposal of all belong to him? What then would they have? God looks when he hath bestowed himself on people, and is become their portion, that they should be content with him, Heb. 13. 5. *Be content with such things as you have, for he hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.*

3. We are informed of the vast difference there is betwixt the portion of the servants of God, and that of carnal men, Job 20. 29. discoursing of the evils which attend irreligious and profane men, saith, *This is the portion of a wicked man from God, and the heritage appointed to him by God,* Psal. 11. 6. *upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup.* And our Saviour, Mat. 24. 51. shews that Hypocrites and profane persons have their portion where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. This is sad, but yet whilst God deals thus with them, he proceeds more favourably with his own people. He himself who is light, and life, and love, is their portion, when carnal men have alledged all that ever they can in the behalf of their portions, we may cry out with the Prophet, Jer. 10. 16. *The portion of Jacob is not like them, for he is the former of all things, and Israel is the rod of his inheritance, the Lord of hosts is his name.*

2. *Use of Exhortation.* 1. Let us rejoyce and glory in our portion. When people have great portions they use to be affected with them. Oh then how much should this portion transport our hearts with joy! Had we a whole mountain of Silver and Gold, a whole Empire, nay the whole world for our portion, it were not comparable to what we have in having God for our portion, Psal. 16. 5, 6. *The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, and of my cup, thou maintainest my lot. The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places, yea I have a goodly heritage.*

2. Let us live upon him. What have people portions for; but to live upon them? God then being our portion and inheritance, let him be unto us Gold and Silver, Lands and Livings, Food and rayment, and let us depend upon him for preservation and sustenance. By faith we make all things ours, as God hath offered himself and Son to our faith, *1 Cor. 3. 22.* All things are yours, whether *Paul* or *Apollo*, or *Cephas*, or the world, and what is better than the world, or present life, and the comforts of it? Things to come, which are not seen, which are eternal.

3. Let us make account that however things go, we shall be provided for and supplied. Other portions may fail us many ways: but God is such a portion, that he will never fail us, but will prove abundantly sufficient to all intents and purposes, *Phil. 4. 19.* *But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Jesus Christ.* We shall not want, here he will withhold no good from us, and what can he deny that spared not his own Son, and freely bestows himself upon us, and in glory we shall have life everlasting.

3. *Use of Comfort.* To all you who are the servants of God, especially to you who have not those worldly portions and possessions which others have, be of good cheer; God will be your portion: You have not those hundreds and thousands which others have: You cannot go at that rate, and feed at that rate as others do; yet be content, for you have more than ten thousands of Gold and Silver, God the fulness of all. Though you have not the streams, yet you have the fountain, what need you to care? You perhaps are troubled to see your selves in straits, and that it is not with you as it is with others; yet be not cast down, you have God, and he is All-sufficient: If you think he is not, deal plainly, and tell us so, that we may vindicate him from your contempt and blasphemy: If he be, then acquiesce in him. You may be assured so far as he sees the things of this world necessary for you, he will deal them out to you. *Rem. 8. 32.* *He that spared not his own Son, will with him give us all things.* *Asaph* had his trouble as well as other men, yet this quieted him, that God was his Portion for ever.